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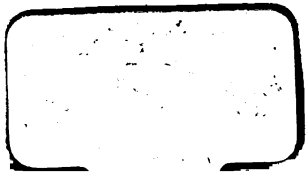
# SERMONS

*Rev. J. Vaughan, M.A.*



# SERMONS

PREACHED

IN CHRIST CHURCH BRIGHTON

BY THE

## REV JAMES VAUGHAN M.A.

*Incumbent*

REPORTED FOR THE "BRIGHTON PULPIT"

**Third Series.**

LONDON

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# "Peace be Unto You:"

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, July 31st, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Peace be unto you."—JOHN xx. 19.

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THESE were the first words which Jesus spoke after a separation, and they were spoken not to the eleven only, but, as is plain from St. Luke, to others with them, that is, the Church. They were the first public words.

The separation, indeed, had been a very short one, but we learn to measure time, not by hours, but by the facts, and the thoughts, and the feelings which those hours have presented. And measured by that gauge, what an interval was that! To Him—the agony of the longest night that ever wore itself away—the protracted misery of that farce of judgment—the faint and weary procession up the hill—the six hours of death, unparalleled for pain and desolation—and then the descent into hell, with all its mysteries—the in-

calculable achievement of that solitary mission—and the resurrection, in its flood of fresh and contrasting glory. While to them, the awful vigil at the grave—the sin, the deep, deep sin of the desertion, and all its after bitterness—the scatterings and the groupings—the slow abandonment of hopes cherished so fondly and so long—the utter bewilderment of mind, and the faint dawning again of reviving hopes—surely these were things to multiply by millions the moments of that little space which lay between the holy supper on the Thursday evening, and the hour when gathered together, probably at the same place, they saw Him again in their midst, and heard the blest words of greeting and of comforting, "Peace be unto you."

The words themselves, so familiar now, but still so eloquent in their simplicity, must have carried with them at that, their first utterance, a special force. For it was as one coming back from the dead Himself to bring, nay, Himself to be His own blessing. With almost dying lips He had bequeathed it, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," and there He stood, Himself the peace of which He had spoken. And all that had gone between—the suffering on the cross, the grave, and the resurrection, composed the peace. Before it was a promise, now it was a possession; there it had been a prophecy, here it was an event. He had bought it, He had created it, He had completed it,—"Peace, peace be unto you."

The original words are only two—"Peace to you." And you may fill in the second as you like—"Peace is to you," it is yours, a fact—or prayer and benediction, at the mouth of Jesus, are the same thing—a prayer is a benediction, and a benediction is a prayer—"Peace be unto you."

And take this thought in passing—Jesus always brings the fulfilment of His own promises; He does not send them—that would be little—He brings them.

And now let us try to catch, if we may, something of the meaning of those words, as they were said at that threshold—the threshold, be it remembered, of the whole Church-state, for the Church-state, properly speaking, dates itself from the resurrection.

Note, then, that peace is the first gift of Christ—the end, indeed, the far end of all He did, and said, and suffered—and who shall analyze all that went to make the composition of that blessed thing, of which we so often speak as if it was a common thing, and call it "Peace?"

But, nevertheless, though the last of the atonement, the very first thing which Christ offers to every man is "Peace." Remember, remember its absolute priority. Do not think to work up to it, take it; do not wait for it, it is here—"Peace." You will do nothing well till you have it,—God will not be glorified in you till you have it,—God is not believed till you have it,—you are not in your right relationship to God till you have it. Therefore it was that the pinnacle of His grace became the foundation of His Church, and the very day that He completed His own work, He hastened to lay, as the corner-stone of the spiritual temple—"Peace"—rest of mind, an humble sense of acceptance, the stillness of a soul that feels right with God, like an anthem always going up in a little sanctuary. A man who loves God is always having interviews with the returning Saviour. They have been parted awhile, and the man knows only too well why they have been parted awhile; and then they meet, that is, Christ comes back to His own place.

And let that man never forget that the first word of every interview with Christ is "Peace."

Every time you go up to your room, and kneel down to pray, it is an interview, after more or less distance, but it is an interview with Christ. Listen for the first accents of the return, and hold that interview not begun till you have heard, "Peace be unto you."

But the words become more touching and more comforting when we throw the emphasis where I doubt not the disciples felt it, and where Jesus meant it, "*to you*"—"Peace be *to you*." Remember what they had all done since they had heard that voice last, and how mean, and how hollow, and how shame-faced, they must all have felt. And here was the wonder and the joy—not that there was peace, but that it was to them—"Peace *to you*."

And so it is, and so it will be for ever and for ever—the marvel of that strange conjunction—the sweetest thing in earth and heaven, coupled with that vilest thing—"My heart." Who but He could have ever put those two things together—"Peace—to you."

And I come back to you, this day, in this place, a poor miserable man, but God's own messenger. He does not please Himself to stand before you now as He did at that room in Jerusalem, though He might, but He sends me. Can I doubt it? If I doubt it, where is my ministry? He sends me to say whatever He would have said; and He says it, and therefore I say it, "Peace be unto you."

And who knows but God has some special end in all this? My hand draws the bow, but it is not my eye that points the arrow. There may be one here this day like Peter, or like John, not

quite at peace. And not I, but Jesus, comes back this day, and He says, for I cannot say it, but He in me, "Peace be unto you."

Accept it, my brother, accept it without a question, fearlessly, "peace"—peace with God, peace with your conscience, peace with the past, peace with the present, peace with the future; for He is saying it to you, "Peace be to you."

But there are two more thoughts connected with this affectionate recognition which I am anxious to press upon you,

It was not an isolated peace which our Lord gave—no true peace is ever an isolated thing. Twice indeed He said the words, "Peace be unto you," as though what He was about to add needed a double basis; and then He went on, "Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." *Peace and mission*—there must be peace, and there must be mission; where there is no mission, there is no peace. As soon as ever you know you are forgiven, a voice says, "Go, go to some duty, go to some self-denial, go to some work of love, go where I, by your conscience, send you." And the mission is the seal of the peace. If you do not obey the mission, I will not say you have no peace, but I do say that you will not retain the peace. For the peace of God is never kept but by work for God.

And this day is there no new thing, or is there no old thing done, with new affections, which we could, every one of us, go and determine to enterprise now? Look round, hear, think. You have your peace, be sure that you watch and listen for your mission. Ask for it, accept it, command it, and then enshrine the peace, and make it sure, by work.

But Christ knew well that even to His disciples the

peace He gave and the mission He imposed would be nothing unless there were a certain state of mind to receive it. Therefore we read, "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'" It has been suggested that Christ's salutation to His people on this occasion spoke only of peace, and did not add grace, and this differed from the usual apostolic salutation, "Grace and peace,"—for this reason,—that grace, standing generally for the whole work of the Spirit, and that Spirit not being yet given, because that Christ was not yet glorified, therefore He said only "Peace." Certain it is that He now accompanied the gift of peace and the commission of work with some measure at least of the Holy Ghost—given, if I may so speak, before its time—for this very reason—that there might be power to take the one and to do the other.

And if then, O how much more now? How utterly vain will be my "Peace to you," unless there be a frame of heart which corresponds to it. For it is all in this—"Peace to the child of peace." And the Holy Ghost Himself must make you a child of peace before you can even understand the word that clothes the mystery.

Come, come, O Spirit of comfort and love, and breathe upon this dear people, that they may both receive the peace and do the work!

Since last I spoke to you from this place, we have all had our ruffling sorrows, and over some of you heavy waves have rolled. But I would that this very day might enfold all the past of sin and suffering into this one present and this one future—"Peace be unto you."

We may, and we surely are, on the eve of troublous

times, but still to His Church the voice of Christ is clear and unchangeable, above the din, the tumult and the thunder of war—"Peace be unto you." And little will it matter what agitation there may be in the outer world, if down in our own hearts we can each of us echo that word, and say, "Yes, Lord, it is all peace here."

And then, when one more parting is over, it will not be a parting—He will be near, and His first words, perhaps, will be the very same again, and you will hear them,—"Peace be unto you."

# "The Day of Adversity:"

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, August 7th, 1870.

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"In the day of adversity, consider."—ECCLESIASTES vii. 14.

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THERE are very few who will not be ready to consent that the eve of an impending war, and of such a war as now lowers on the horizon, with all its possible and probable complications, is indeed a "day of adversity."

And though it does not belong either to me or to this place to deal with the affairs of nations, yet I do feel that a monitory word cannot be inopportune, and that I am well within my province when I lift up my voice at this juncture, even here, and say, "Consider."

For it is in the very nature of the excitement which the occasion produces to make the duty of consideration more difficult. And therefore it is more necessary that religion should come in to enforce it. And we can never forget that there is nothing perhaps which more grieves our Heavenly Father than this inconsideration of His providences,—according to that

affecting climax of all His pleading — "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

It would be the greatest mistake to suppose that afflictions of any kind, personal or public, ever necessarily produce a true thoughtfulness. All experience testifies to the contrary. Who that has gone through sorrow and trouble could not tell of the disappointments he has felt with regard to the moral effects he thought that trouble would produce upon his mind? Who cannot tell of those times wasted, and, worse still, of a sullen, proud, shutting-up of himself into his own thought, occupied selfishly and morosely with himself, and of a hardening of heart at the very moment when it ought to have melted, and of rebellious feelings, aye, temptations and falls, such as he never would have conceived to be possible in a time of affliction?

And as respects seasons of public calamity, all history bears testimony that times of pestilence, times of famine, times of war, have been characterised, to an enormous and incredible extent, by an almost unparalleled state of demoralization and vice. It is not in vain, therefore, that the Spirit warns us, "In the day of adversity, consider."

It may not be known to all that the word "consider" is itself of high and heavenly character. It is drawn from the office of the augur, whose part it was to study the celestial bodies, and it means literally "Group the stars." An appropriate and beautiful metaphor for those whose duty it is to collect the rays of divine light, and to make constellations of the promises—a work, be it remembered, which it belongs to the night to do. May it be given to us always in our nights of

sorrow, so to range among upper truths, that we may gather some of the gems of the darkness—"In the day of adversity, consider."

On entering on any dark passage of life, public or private, the first thing we have to do is to pause and ask ourselves, "Why is this thing come upon us? and what end may God have in view?"

Now, as respects the cause, it is not for us to charge, with the authorship of any evil, anyone except ourselves. We should be violating the letter and spirit of Christ's teaching if we called any one a sinner because a judgment fell upon him. All we have to do in this matter is personal. But we do know whence wars have their origin. "They chose new gods; then was war in the gates." That is a remarkable sequence of thought. And there is another no less distinct—"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members?"

The question, then, is this, Have we had anything to do with "new gods?" has our Church? has Christendom? Have we "lusts" which may, directly or indirectly, have caused "war?"

I wish to leave this entirely for your own application—only remember two things—that in the great network of Providence it is impossible to calculate or to over-estimate how one mesh or one thread may bear upon and affect, for good or evil, the whole fabric; and also that no one must say, "I am only one, a very insignificant unit, among thousands and millions, and it is impossible that anything I individually can do or say shall influence the circle of empires." That thought is one which would not only render useless all preaching upon social subjects, but would sap the very

foundation of civil responsibility, and would destroy the whole spirit of patriotic action. What is a country but each of its pieces multiplied into the number of its inhabitants—a community in which each one must feel and act as if the whole issue of his country's destinies rested only upon himself?

How far, then, this war may be the consequence of any loss or diminution of our national—or which is the same thing, our individual—character, or how far that loss and diminution may be the result of each one's own "new gods," or each one's own "lusts," it rests with every one of us to "consider."

But as regards the end which God may have in view, what we have to do is this—First, to pray that prayer, which ought to be offered at the entrance of every trial, "Lord, whatever purpose thou mayst have in view in this dispensation, give me, if it please Thee, grace to know it; but whether I know it or not, let Thy purpose be fulfilled." And then to watch, to watch. "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" Whether it be to punish Protestantism for its coldness and its inanition—whether it be to humble and chasten, or even to overthrow Popery in the very moment of its most inordinate and monstrous claims and assumptions—whether it be only more generally for the chastening and proving of the nations, or for the opening of shut doors, and so for the furtherance of truth—or whether it be for the bringing in of something as yet undeveloped and unknown—to watch the movements of the hand, the liftings of the veil, and so to recognise prophecy, as prophecy becomes little by little fulfilled—the great and real end of prophecy, which all can do, and more than which, no man is required to do.

And now let me pursue the subject more practically, and let me urge you, brethren, at this moment, to a balanced frame of mind, to be deliberate and serious, never speak or think lightly about this war. A Christian should be above the common-place, much more above the levity of people of the world. And for this reason—they look only at facts as they come up to the surface—the Christian sees always within, and underlying the facts, the mind, the will, the presence, the cause, the purpose, the glory of God. Therefore, think measuredly and speak discreetly. It is a very solemn thing with which we have to do.

Hitherto, up to this point of the war, the danger is of regarding it as we regard a spectacle,—a thing which lies some where away from us in the distance, —and with which we are not personally concerned. We ought not to feel that. For what is the cause of man, and the cause of the Church, and the cause of God, is our cause. Who knows how near it may come to us, and how soon? Therefore, try to view and to talk of the matter without prejudice, without party, but still more, without trifling and without indifference. There is too much of eternity in it that we should ever run at that low level.

As war goes on, there is always a danger of the lowering of the moral standard in those who are affected by it. For instance, there is always a tendency to think less and less of the value of human life. The mind familiarizes itself far too quickly with slaughter, and the awful sacrifice of victory. Therefore, be always reminding yourself, when you read of multitudes of the slain—remind yourself what life is in God's sight—what one life is, what it has cost, what it is worth, what is its destiny. Never forget the souls of soldiers.

There they lie upon the ground by hundreds. All those dead bodies—had not they souls? Where are they?

And remember, the battle-field is not the whole of the war. Is it the chief part? There is the pageant, and the eye is delusively drawn to its focus. But what is behind? Follow the ambulances—go into the hospital tents—visit the mansions or cottages, the homes of the bereaved—the widows and the orphans—see the devastated land and the silent factories, and famine stalking wildly wherever the foot of armies has trod—and hear the wail of wretchedness echoing long to the shout of triumph—that is war!

And if you think of this, need I say, never do you omit to do all you can to reconstruct the broken pieces,—always throw your bias in every conversation you ever hold, or anything you ever write, throw your bias on the side of peace. Do not merge your individual responsibility in this matter in the general ocean of politics—strive in every way you can to advocate peace. And no one knows, or can know, how far any word he says or writes, may reach, for evil or for good, for discord or for truce. Therefore, always lead everything to peace.

And let me urge upon you another consideration. There can be no doubt whatever that times of distress and suffering are before us. Even though we be not sucked into the whirlpool, we shall be tossed and imperilled in its eddies. Therefore, remember, that even at the best, we have serious and severe things before us. We shall be at war-prices in the winter. Many men will fail in business. Many of you will have your incomes diminished. The sick and the wounded in other countries at least will be very many,

and will call for sympathy. You may not be able to go and render your personal attendance, but they will be within reach and in need of your gifts and charity. So will your poor at home. Therefore, at once begin to order your expenses, so that you may be ready for extra calls, which will certainly come. Retrench; curtail your indulgences. So you will be safe. So towards God, done for Christ's sake, it will be an appropriate and acceptable act itself of humiliation, and so you will make room, which love will want for its exercise. I advise you to go softly, go softly. It ill becomes such a time as this to walk in pride, to flaunt in fashion, and to roll in selfishness. Is not it rather a time for humiliation, and thought, and repentance, and amendment?

And still more—pray much about this war. When you go up to your room morning and evening, do not forget it; in your family prayers, do not forget it; and in church, remember it, We have no special prayer in our Liturgy which we can well use at this juncture; but there are several parts of our ordinary service which are admirably applicable. Take occasion by them, and throw more than usual feeling and intensity when you come to those sentences,—"Give peace in our time, O Lord; because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God."—"That it may please Thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord—We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord."

There was once a war which was ruled not so much by the battle in the plain as by the hands which were held up upon the mount. And at this moment, England is that mount, and the prayers of the Church here, if they be patient and sustained, as Moses was,

will do more to decide the issue, and maintain the right, than all the batons of generals, or those terrible weapons of the soldier.

But the man who would "consider" must have his eye more upward. What if man threatens, what if the passions of men are raging? "The Lord reigneth, the Lord reigneth, He sitteth above the waterfloods." Do you understand that?—in the familiar language of prophecy, the waters are always the nations. "He sitteth above the waterfloods,"—that is, above the agitations of nations,—"and He remaineth a King for ever." "He ordereth all things after the counsel of His own will;" "He shall work, and who shall let it?"—"And the wrath of man shall praise Him,"—and if there be any wrath that does not praise Him, that wrath shall not be—for "the remainder of wrath He will restrain."

Therefore, however mysterious, however awful, this war may seem, do not give way to foolish fears, and unbelieving apprehensions. Have faith in sovereignty. The masses of mighty armies are but puppets of which He holds the strings. Kings may reign, and emperors may decree, but the command of the Lord, it shall stand. "Be still, and know that I am God," "for I know the thoughts which I think towards you," —says God to His own—"I know the thoughts which I think toward *you*, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

We had, perhaps, thought in our simplicity that the age of war had passed, and that in the march of civilization, we had reached a point where everything would be settled upon moral principles, and by the laws of international jurisprudence. But God is teaching us what we might have learned from His word,

that it is not so, nor will be, so long as this dispensation lasts. Before the flood, this was man's character—"Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." And after the flood had swept over the earth and done its worst, this is the character still. God is careful to identify the very words—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." And all that has raged over our world since the creation, and all that has happened to it, and all its sufferings, and all its education, and all its advancement, has never made man really one bit wiser. We have reason to believe and expect that as the end of the world comes on, things will be quite as bad, aye, worse. Arts and sciences will never hush war; and knowledge and experience will never change man's heart, or weaken human passions. It is Christ's coming which will do that, and then, and only then, "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

And all these things which are beginning now to come to pass in the earth they may be—I do not say they are—but they may be the predicted signs and harbingers of the Advent. Greater things than their authors ever thought of, may be evolving from those movements which we are so anxiously watching. Anti-Christ may rise, Popery may fall, Christ may be here, even now He may be at the very doors. Therefore, lift up your heads; be ready to catch the first light of the morning as it breaks upon the hills; be prepared; stand in your lot; be wise; "consider."

# Sanctuary Thoughts:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, August 14th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"Until I went into the sanctuary of God."—PSALM lxxiii. 17.

WE all have found how very different the same thing looks under different circumstances. A fresh form or posture, another part of the same four-and-twenty hours, a slight alteration in the state of our health, a new standing point, a trifling association of ideas, a mere passing incident, will throw anything at once into a new aspect, and invest it with a perfectly different character.

Or we have found it thus. We go on for a long time in one line and habit of mind on subjects; it seems as if there could not possibly be any other way in which we could think of them, when a new providence falls upon us, we come to one of those crisises

which often cross our path in life, and we wake up to a fresh existence. We can scarcely understand it, so unlike themselves do old things become. What looked so great is now so little, and what looked so little is now so great. Either facts must have changed, or we,—in such different channels do our feelings now run.

And if there be such strange metamorphoses of thought and feeling without the introduction of any really new principle, what may we not expect to be the transformation of judgment when religion is brought in as a fresh element into a man's mind? How very very different will every object stand out to us the first moment that it begins to be tinged with eternity!

David's exquisitely delicate mind was probably more than usually sensitive to these changes. On the occasion of the present psalm, he had been thinking of the disorders and tumults which were in the world —of the triumphs of the wicked, and the sufferings of the good—the mysteries of providence—the paradoxes of life — the apparent anarchy which there was in God's earth. It all grew so confused and so dizzy to his mind that "It was too painful for him." And so it went on, apparently for a long time, "until"—O how many things have their "until" —how many perplexities, how many mistakes, how many sorrows! For all things have their low-water mark if only we could see it. There are fixed lines of demarcation between confusion and order, ignorance and knowledge, trouble and relief, which our duty is to find; fissures where all is dark without and all is light within,— "until"—and those "untils" God has predetermined—

they will appear in His proper time. With ten thousand insolvable problems, it is only "until:"—some, "Till I come"—many more, "Till we go into the sanctuary of God."

David was harrassed and cast down as long as he kept in the world's wide outer circle of observation; but as soon as he went into his own proper sphere of thought, all was right—"Then understood I." So that presently he is able to wind up his psalm, and say, "It is good for me to draw nigh unto God"—that is, to go into the sanctuary—"I will put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works"—not partially, and therefore inaccurately and wrongly, as he did before—but "all thy works," in their integrity and in their equipoise—"I have drawn near, and now I can declare all thy works."

What "the sanctuary" was into which David thus opportunely went, it is not very easy to decide. It could not have been the holy of holies, which is often called the sanctuary, because into that only the high priest could enter on the 10th day of the month Tizri; neither could it have been the holy place outside the veil, for that belonged to the priests also. And though it is just possible that David might, by virtue of the great office of his royalty, be considered worthy of some sacerdotal privileges, yet we have no reason to think that he, or any other king, ever went into that sanctuary. Perhaps the expression "sanctuary," meant the whole precincts of the tabernacle or temple. Or more likely still, it relates not to place at all, but to a certain frame of mind, or inner access of heart to God, of which the sanctuary was the emblem and type—"Until I went into the sanctuary of God."

It is in this sense, of course, that we must take our lesson this morning,—only endeavouring first to discriminate what would be the exact ideas which that image would convey to the Psalmist's mind.

If, then, I had to say what are the thoughts which the word "sanctuary" would bring to the mind of a Jew, I should say first, the idea of separation, being alone with God, unworldly, a thing dedicated.

Next, stillness, removal from the rush and the noise of life, and the conflict of opinions, and the strife of tongues.

With it, holiness, a reflection of God being on every side.

Fourthly, refuge, a spot of safety where no avenger's step could ever tread, and no hurt could ever come.

Fifthly, the communion of saints, where God's people are.

And lastly, consultation, where God's mind is revealed to those who seek it, either by intervention of priestly office, or by direct influence, specially communicated to those who are "worshipping in spirit and in truth."

But above all, because it includes all, a certain atmosphere of thought—a presence, a felt presence—a nearness of God to the soul, and of the soul to God—infinite communion—a oneness with the infinite. "I went into the sanctuary of God."

The question, then, is, How is a man now to go into "the sanctuary of God?" What must we do if we would imitate David's example, and obtain David's privilege, and a further insight into the providence of God?

Weary, and vexed, and troubled with the scenes

about you, and the tidings which come borne to you on every wind, and with a feeling of the undefined, you determine to seek some place where you may be retired and separate from outward things,—you go and try to deal with realities, with great principles, with eternal truth, with God. And perhaps, to do this the better, you open your Bible, and you search into the will of the Spirit of God—place yourself in contact with the mind of the Eternal—you dip into the deep fountains, or you sit upon the margin, and you listen for still voices which come wafted over the waters.

Or you throw yourself upon your knees—you endeavour to hush every thought into silence and abasement, you go lower and lower into the dust, till there is nothing but your prostrate soul, and God sitting upon His throne in the heavens.

Or you may come up to such a spot as this for the very purpose that you may have closer intercourse with God in church—you mingle in the common prayer—you unite your song with multitudes—you listen to the ordinance of preaching, that you may imbue your heart with more of heaven and more of Christ.

Or you go on a little further, into the inner secrecies of our Holy Communion, and you are fain there to take what your soul hungers after at the very hand of Jesus, and if you may, to lean even upon His bosom.

Or you go, perhaps, to those whom you believe to be better taught than you of the Spirit,—you seek their help and instruction in prayer and counsel, to read the providences, and to understand the mysteries, of the grace of God.

But whichever course you take, it is not so much

the thing you do as the spirit in which you do it—it is the awe of quietness, the sense of humiliation, the sweet feeling of being near, the consciousness that you are known, and that you are loved, and that you are forgiven, and that you are safe, and that you are encircled with what is pure and holy, and that you are on sacred ground, and that He is there, and that He is love.

These are the curtains and the veil, and these are the golden lamps, and here is the incense and the perfume, and this is the sheckinah—which make you feel and know that you are in "the sanctuary of God."

And if I were to put it to you in one word, I should say that to every believer Christ is "the sanctuary of God." For in Christ, the whole Deity enshrines itself. And he does not know yet what it is to go into the sanctuary who does not know what it is to run into Jesus, into the wounded side of that cleft rock, and there shut in, into peace and holiness, to feel "sanctuary."

It is not too much to say that until you have been into such places as these,—or rather, until you have been in such states of mind as these, and there judged of things about you,—you will never make a really correct estimate of anything in the world. You are sure to make great mistakes,—to fear too much, or to fear too little,—to hope too much, or to hope too little,—to blame too much, or to praise too much,—to want balancing power,—to arrive at false results, until you have taken what may be called the sanctuary view of any subject.

The reason is two-fold. One, natural. What we want is calmness. We are seldom calm enough,

especially in times of excitement, to weigh accurately, and to strike the true preponderance of things which hang finely in the balance. The judicial functions of the mind want retreat.

Above all, it is in times of holy retirement, and only in times of holy retirement, that God is pleased to "manifest Himself to His people, as He does not to the world." There are lights which God throws—lights which are the reflections of Himself,—lights of the Holy Ghost—rays of thought from another world which penetrate a subject like a sunbeam, and without which we can never see the whole truth, or understand anything as it really is.

And so essential are these things to us, that if we do not make these spiritual recesses for ourselves, God will make them for us. It is one of the merciful intentions of all affliction that it drives us into the solitudes into which we refused to walk. Therefore God sent you up to your sick room—therefore He makes you shut your doors, and have a darkened chamber—that they may be "sanctuaries." And this is the cause why the judgment of the dying is often so true, and their words are so full of discrimination, and of wisdom, and of truth—because a dying hour is "the sanctuary of God."

And in the retrospect of life, there are very many of you who could map out your whole course into two well-defined portions, of which this should be the one boundary-line—"Until I went into the sanctuary of God." For the great thing, brethren, we all have to do, is to try to see everything as God sees it, and that only can be achieved by placing our minds, or rather, by letting God place them, in a certain attitude, from

which we look out in the same direction, if I may so speak, as God; and so, in a measure, things are to us what things are to Him.

It is of immense importance to us just now to be able to take well-adjusted views of public affairs. For strange things are coming up, and new, and very full of incident and perturbations. If you would be a good thinker, and measure events accurately, and arrive at just conclusions, it must not be after the world's fashion that you judge—you must not take your tone from general opinion, nor your clue to the labyrinth from the newspaper. You must not read history as if it were only profane, and treat politics as a secular thing. You must not let your thoughts range over the world of God, and not recognise the God of the world. You must not make the chronicles of nations a book in which there is no prophecy, and no Church, and no Christ. You must not send out your fears and your hopes to ride upon the troubled ocean helmless and chartless. You must not study the economy of God's government as a servant does—from without—for "the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth"—nor as if the present is all that is to be revealed, for "what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." But you must be a child, and you must have filial thoughts of your Father's wisdom, and your Father's love. You must see things as one of those whose privilege it is humbly to say, "We have the mind of Christ."

And for this end, you must go back from the glare and the confusion of superficial accident, and from the words of men, and from the mere force of national habit of thought, and from the passions and prejudices

of conventional ideas, and you must regard matters soberly, prayerfully, scripturally. You must be still, and look through a clear medium; you must yield up your mind to the influences of the Spirit; you must weigh the scales of eternity; you must recognise and expect grand and holy issues; you must wait, wait with open eye through the windows of providence, with the ear of faith expectant. And as you do it, you may confidently believe that scenes will open to you like a new creation. What was haze to nature's eye, will be as the bright firmament of heaven to the contemplations of faith. The hard will grow easy, the painful things will be the mind's sweet resting-places, and there is many a thought which you have now of which you will say presently, "Ah, I thought that 'until I went into the sanctuary of God,' but I do not think so now."

There are thousands of things occurring every day of which the real solution is, to be more religious,—live nearer to God,—drink more into the mind of Christ. Many a person since David has found it true of many a passage of life, "When I thought to know that"—I thought it in my pride—"it was too hard for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, and there I understood it."

Therefore, take all your difficulties, take all your impossibilities, and lay first yourself and then them, on the mercy-seat, before the oracle, and spread them there.

It is sometimes asked, "How will it be in heaven? Shall we know what is fulfilled on this earth after we have left it? Shall we continue to take an interest in things here? Then shall not we see many things which will pain us, and can there be grief in heaven?"

That is an outside thought. Once inside that "sanctuary," I shall know God too well to be ever pained or grieved again by anything that God does. And this will be the confession of us all for ever and ever, "O how little I knew till I came into this sweet sanctuary!"

# "The Lord is my Shepherd:"

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Evening, August 21st, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."—PSALM xxiii. 1.

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I HAVE two reasons for choosing this text to-night. One is, because I am preaching for a Society which is to help shepherds, that is, pastors—the Church Pastoral Aid Society. And herein lies the excellency of the Society—it does not provide mere preachers, but shepherds; and provides them exclusively for those ministers who are not preachers but shepherds; and in those parishes only which greatly need shepherding—such as, for example, the shepherd and the flock of "All Souls" in this place, the only part of Brighton which receives any help from the Church Pastoral Aid Society. And upon this ground, because it is especially a shepherding Society, I commend it to-

night to your loving confidence, and your generous support.

But I have another reason. It is a very long time since I have had the privilege of preaching to this congregation. And I feel the necessity of reminding you, and reminding myself of one thing—unless I am myself in the fold of Jesus—unless I receive from Him the food that I am to give to you—unless I am in my degree like Him—unless I can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," I, as an under shepherd, am false,—I am nothing,—I can do nothing,—I shall "want" every ministerial gift.

And you, dear brethren. It little matters whether I am present, or whether I am not present—it is of very small consequence who stands in this place—if you can say, looking far above the underlings, "The Lord is my Shepherd," I have the Master. Then you have reached to the level of the loftiest independence —you are above all the accidents of human change— you may use us—you may benefit by us—but we are not essential to any one of you—you are free and you are safe—"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

I am not sure that it is well to look far into the reasons of feelings, or to ask what is the secret of the charm in such a verse as this, that everybody loves it, everybody turns to it, everybody rests on it. Perhaps it will be better to leave it in its own untouched simplicity—only, if I may be able to suggest to you one or two thoughts which underlie the feeling, the feeling will, I hope, close again over the thoughts, and the thoughts themselves will pass away, only to leave the feeling more intelligent and strong.

There can be no doubt that the beauty and power of this verse lie very much in its composure. There is a calmness in it which almost reproduces itself in the mind whenever we say it—"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

And the calmness lies in the assurance. It is a fact, and a conclusion which springs out of that fact by a mathematical consequence—that is, it is a child's faith, and that is assurance. You may talk and speculate about assurance, but there is no comfort and very little reality in religion till there is assurance. What is "I hope," what is "I think," compared to this, —"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want?"

And why should any one not have assurance? He was a very wicked man at times who said these words. The shepherd is not the shepherd only of the good sheep—does not he shepherd the wanderers? Neither do sheep choose the shepherd, but the shepherd chooses the sheep. And the sheep do not hold the shepherd, but the shepherd holds the sheep. What do you wait for? Christ is a shepherd, and you are a poor, weak thing that wants a shepherd,—and He certainly has put you inside the hurdles, for you were baptized, and you are here to-night. Why then should you not say it in its unquivering repose—"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

But in this calm confidence there is wrapped up a feeling—I would rather call it a fact, a most comfortable fact,—the fact of being undertaken for in everything—the sense of devolved responsibility. Now, of course, devolved responsibility may be abused. But the abuse of a thing is no argument against it—rather, the abuse is the measure of the truth—and we may

And see the force of the conjunction of two more words in this little sentence—the present and the future—the "is" and the "shall." "The Lord *is*"—that is present—and "I shall"—that is future. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." There are presents which guarantee and assure every future. I can appeal from the known which is, to all the known which is to be, and I find the "shall be's" all within the "is"—"The Lord *is*—I *shall*." If He has been at the pains to seek me out and to make me His sheep, and if He has given to me such proofs of His care and love since I came into the fold, and if He never changes, then what room is there for a doubt or a fear? Take care that you never invert the tenses. Do not say, "The Lord *will be* my Shepherd"—for if you do, you must add, "I do want." But put God in the present, and then all that is coming is in the covenant, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

But, if I had to select the most telling word of all in the whole passage, I should unhesitatingly say, It is the little word "my." For what would it benefit me to say, "The Lord is a Shepherd?" It would mock me. Should not I rather feel my own destitution and desolation the more, if I felt that He was a Shepherd to others and not to me, and that I could not put the seal of property upon it, and say, "*My Shepherd?*" The whole arch would fall to the ground without that key-stone. Surely that "my" should be written in letters of gold.

And how do we get to the saying it? I will tell you. Christ says it first to you, "mine." You hear it, you take it in, you believe it, and you echo it—

"mine." It is always an echo, always an echo—"mine." "Thou art mine."

On which sheep, think you, in all David's flock when he was a boy did he look the most gladly and the most lovingly? What sheep in all David's flock loved David most? Unquestionably, the sheep which he had delivered from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear.

And on whom does Jesus imprint most deeply His "mine?" And who can say it with the strongest emphasis back again to Jesus, "Mine?" He who has been most forgiven,—he who has known most of the power and the misery of sin,—he who has been most nurtured. I do not say, if you—for you are—but I say, feel that you are that one, and you will never find it hard after that to say again, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

From these two conjunctions, and this possessive, it is an easy step up to, "I shall not want."

"I shall not want" for food,—for "Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies."

"I shall not want for drink,"—for "my cup runneth over."

"I shall not want" for grace and beauty,—for "thou anointest my head with oil."

"I shall not want" where to lie down,—for the "pasture" shall be "green."

"I shall not want" for quietness,—for "He hath led me by still waters."

"I shall not want" for companionship,—for He is at my side.

"I shall not want" for guidance,—for "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

"I shall not want" a welcome back again when I have wandered,—for "He restoreth my soul."

"I shall not want" for "goodness and mercy,"—for they "shall follow me all the days of my life."

"I shall not want" in my affliction,—for "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

"I shall not want" in dying,—for "Thou art with me."

"I shall not want" for a home beyond,—for "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

That is the "my."

Yesterday, I told a sick and dying person what my text would be to-night, and I asked her to give me a thought. And she said, or rather she whispered, for she could not speak, she whispered to me, "Tell them that every thing is in Christ, and, therefore, if they have Christ, they have everything; and, then, how can they 'want?'"

What, then, you say, does a Christian never "want" for the necessaries of life? I say "No, he does not want." David said it, and David's Son said it, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Let a man have faith, and let him do faith's proper work, and he will always have the essentials of life.

But for any good thing will he want? I answer, No. "For no good thing"—as God calls good—"for no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

I believe that it is very rare for the wild animals to want, for "He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him," and "He openeth His hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness." But "the young

lions do lack and suffer hunger"—the maternal instinct of the lioness is not so strong as the providence of God —"the young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

What is "want?" The excess of the desire beyond the possession? But he whose heart is right with God, as David's was, will not desire what it is not in God's providence that he shall possess.

But what is "want?" A privation which really hurts me. I may wish—it is my duty to wish—for many things. I may long,—it is my duty to long and covet earnestly many things. But to wish, and to long, and to covet, is not to "want"—"I shall not want."

And do not think of "want" as if it was a poor man's lot. It was a king who wrote this verse, and felt the blessedness of being placed in a condition of immunity from want. And be he rich or be he poor, be he simple or be he gentle, until he can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," no man will ever truly say, "I shall not want." It is not a poor man's text.

But from the moment that you really let Him make you His, He is at all charges for you, to pay all your debts, to supply all your need of soul and body, to begin and to carry on, and to perfect His own work in you, to feel with you like a brother; to go with you every step of the way, to be "your arm every morning," to give you Himself as your satisfying portion, to prepare a place for you in heaven, and you for your place,—to love you for ever, and for ever, and for ever. For all this and more, if there be more, He has undertaken. And if only you have faith enough, it all lies within the words, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

What rest that soul has found which can lie down at night and feel, "For all these things my Saviour has made Himself responsible for me to-morrow, and the next day, and all my life, and all my eternity."

And is it true? Is all this to be had, I do not say for the asking, but for the taking? Then, who would not be a Christian? Why should you go to bed to-night without that perfect abandonment of all care upon the bosom of the promises?

Of one thing you may be quite sure—that for anything you ever give to that Shepherd, He will never let you "want." Therefore, do not be afraid to give freely to the Society which helps shepherds.

To that great Master-Shepherd I commit you.

# The Good Samaritan:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, August 28th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

IN AID OF THE FUND FOR THE SICK AND WOUNDED IN THE PRESENT WAR.

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"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine."—LUKE x. 34.

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THE design of the parable of the good Samaritan—if parable it be, for many hold it to be real history, it is so very like life—was to explain the word "neighbour." And the explanation is rather the converse of what might have been expected. The commandment had run, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and the question arose out of it, "Who is the neighbour whom I ought to love?" And we might naturally have thought that the story, which was to explain it, would have made the person who is beloved the "neighbour;" whereas, in the narrative, the "neighbour" is the person who loves. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy." The fact, of course, is that the traveller and

the Samaritan were "neighbours" equally, each to the other—the word being relative must be mutual; but the one who recognised the relationship is selected for the illustration, because there lay the example and the lesson.

"Who, then, is my neighbour?" Every one? Not exactly. That answer would be true in possibility, but it would not be accurate in fact. My "neighbour" is every one, who, in the providence of God, is brought into such connexion with me, that I can and ought to affect him in some way for good. The traveller and the Samaritan were not neighbours, until the traveller falling into circumstances which made him need help, and the Samaritan coming into a position in which he could render that help, there was immediately established between them, through that coincidence, a neighbourhood, which each of them was equally bound to feel.

So, at this moment, there are thousands and millions of our fellow-creatures who are not our neighbours; but let any one of them, at any moment, be brought within the reach of our influence, and thereby have a claim on our sympathy and care, and straightway the nearness which there is, or ought to be, in every man's heart always ready to spring up towards every man in the world, is drawn out and called into action in that direction, and by that sequence of place and accident; and we shall sin if our feelings and actions are not neighbourly.

There may be a nation on the other side of the earth with which to-day I have nothing whatever to do; but to-morrow, let a way of access be opened and presented

to me, by which I could approach that nation, and let an occasion arise of doing it good which, in my conscience, I feel to be providential, and at once our neighbourhood is established and complete, and I am constrained to perform a neighbour's, *i.e.*, a near one's part, whether it be for their souls, or whether it be for their bodies.

If you would only read it so, the course of the events of this world is always being so ordered as to bring new persons within our circle, that we may act by them a neighbour's part.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to make neighbourhood with man, when He took upon Him our nature. And so, making Himself nearer to us than all other nearness beside, He did the nearest one's part—O how neighbourly! "Wounded," and "spoiled," and as good as "dead,"—coming down to us or ever we asked Him, —looking on us only to pity us,—"binding up" poor bleeding hearts, that were themselves dying of their death-wounds,—"pouring in the oil" of His comfortings and "the wine" of His cleansings,—"setting us" on high places from which He had Himself descended for our sake, to become a weary wayfarer on the high road of this rough earth,—bringing us to the refuges and the entertainments of His Church, that pilgrims' home on earth—and there not leaving us to others' skill, but Himself "taking care of us," and yet bidding His people to take care of us too,—promising to "repay" abundantly all that is ever done to us, and making Himself at all charges—and drawing on Himself at His second advent for all our debts. That was neighbourhood.

You can scarcely make a greater mistake than to think little, or to suppose that God thinks little of physical suffering. Were not almost all Christ's miracles done for the body? Are you aware, that as far as we know, only one person came to Christ, while He was upon earth, in spiritual distress? And a very great part of His discourses, especially the sermon on the mount—are they not relative to the wants of the body? Were not His own sufferings largely corporeal? And the things done or undone, which are to stand out for us, or against us, at the judgment, have they not regard almost exclusively to the body? And the very rewards and penalties of another world, if they will not consist very much in what is material, at least are they not described to us under material images?

It often occurs to me to find sick and suffering persons grieved that they think so much about their poor bodies, and conducting themselves as if they had done a sin. It is right to think of the body—it is as right to think about the body as it is to think about the soul. They who are judging themselves severely for feeling so much about their bodily trials, and for thinking and speaking about them, and writing hard things which God has not written, are greatly to be pitied. Is not the body God's work? Is not the body redeemed? Is not the body to live for ever? Is not the body in the sympathies of Jesus? Is not the body in the likeness of God? Is not the body the temple of God?

Those who are kind to people's bodies for Christ's sake may be doing what is quite as acceptable to God

as those who are doing spiritual good. There is a great tendency to think of bodily trials as if they were nothing in comparison to spiritual ones, and to think it religion to disparage the pains of the one, and to recognise little but the afflictions of the other. But it would be well to see whether in such sentiments there is not very little of the mind of Christ, and a great deal which is high-flown and unreal. I feel that I am never more like my Master than when I am trying, for the love of God, to minister to the necessities of the bodies of the aching and the infirm.

I trust that I need not ask your indulgence for inviting you to-day to make a collection for the sick and wounded in the war between France and Germany. We have reason to believe that the number of the sufferers on either side is enormous, perhaps unprecedented, and their distresses must be intense. It needs no more to make our hearts leap to their relief, and all distinctions of race or creed, of right or wrong, vanish before such a demand upon our common humanity. It is proposed to forward your gifts to-day, and any necessaries or comforts for the sufferers which you may kindly send to our schoolrooms, to the National Society for the Sick and Wounded, in London, which is formed to distribute aid indiscriminately to the afflicted soldiers of both countries. I should have given the usual notice of the collection last Sunday, if I had not thought it unfair towards the Church Pastoral Aid Society, whose claims were then being submitted to you, and whose interests such an announcement was not unlikely to prejudice. And I have it to-day because I thought that you would feel

with me that the demand upon us is already become so very urgent, that even another week's delay would be wrong. The want of notice need not injure to-day's collection, for of course those who are unprovided now may give their contributions at the other services of the day, or send them to the schoolroom, or to their ministers.

It has been objected that we ought not to alienate from our own country those requisites and alleviations of war which we ourselves may very soon need. Were a war at home imminent, or even highly probable, I think there would be some force in that argument. But as the case stands, I do not see any sufficient reason why we should depart from the usual laws of charity; and we must act nationally on the same principle which would rule us individually. All charity must have faith in it, and to give what we are never likely to want is little worth. Whereas, to pass by any distress as though it belonged not to us,—either wilfully not seeing it, or selfishly seeing it, but acting as if we had not seen it,—is like those who are held up to the greatest reprobation—the Levite, the Priest, Dives rolling out in his carriage at the gate where Lazarus lay. The excellence of the Samaritan was this—that what he did he did generously for an alien in birth, a half-enemy, at least, in disposition, and a heretic in religion.

Rather may we not hope that through this ministration, we shall throw some tenderness by our example, into the excited and discordant feelings of men, and be ourselves in a better position to mediate presently between the contending parties. But whether this be

so or not, we shall have done what is right before God, between man and man, and we may the better trust that He who never forgets anything we do, will the rather graciously preserve to our country the inestimable blessing of peace.

The great mission of every woman is to be a comforter. The great work of every Christian man is tenderness. And if this war do really call woman to her mission, and if it do draw out and cherish the softnesses of Englishmen, then this alone will be no small set-off against all war's wretchedness.

I am bold, therefore, to ask you both to give this day of your bounty, and to send if you will at any time to the schoolrooms, any hospital necessities or comforts, which shall be forwarded to the scene of war, —thus fulfilling to the very letter Christ's condition of brotherhood, binding up and healing the wounds of strangers.

"Wounds"—in the very name there is a sacredness. Blessed wounds!—what do we not all owe to wounds? Were they not once the fountains of all our pardon, and all our purity, when from those precious wounds of Jesus flowed the water and the blood—our only incense, our only peace, our only hope, our life, our all?

We thank Thee, blessed Jesus, that Thou hast not left even the horrors of the battle-field outside Thy sympathies. Thee, too, the steel has pierced; Thou hast ached. And O, that in "binding up the wounds" of those for whom Thou hast died, and "pouring in the oil and wine," we might be accepted of Thee as doing it even for Thy hands, Thy feet, Thy side, O Jesus!

O that we might share in that high privilege of that holy woman of Bethany, and that even of our humble offering, made through the body to the Head, Thou wouldest, of Thy infinite condescension, say, "Done for my hour of agony."

# The Mysteries of Providence:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, September 4th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."—PSALM lxxvii. 19.

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THERE is a mysterious character still hanging over the present war. We all feel it;—a conviction that there must have been reasons for it deeper than theories. Its sudden outbreak,—its rapid strides,—its enormous armies,—its awful slaughter,—the strange way in which it has crossed and baffled all human calculation,—the infatuation which seems cast like a veil over minds, and still more, in these days of intelligence, the absence of information,—the singular silence, and the unknown,—and now the strange complication,—and above all, the difficulty, not to say the impossibility of discerning what the mind of God is in this matter—what great end He has in view, and what are the moral and religious results, which are to be evolved:—all

these things shrouded with such a cloud, the awe, as awe it is, makes it a solemn, I had almost said, a sacred thing.

Men's minds are confounded. And we look on with a wonder, which forces us into religious thought—"What is this that God is doing?" And in the hush of the darkness, we wait for His voices.

The occasion naturally wakes up the question—"Why, O Lord, art thou a God that hidest thyself? And what are the lessons, and what are the duties, which lie hidden in thy providences. For they meet us not here, O Lord, anywhere." The enigma of life is a very great part of the discipline of life; and if passing events now lead us to any truer thoughts about the occult dealings of God, we shall not have studied them in vain. Therefore, to this, I wish to draw your attention this morning.

There must be mystery in religion—a religion which lies between the finite and the Infinite. Take away mystery, and we should tear out a page of evidence. I would scarcely believe in a religion which had no mystery. But you will find, brethren, that there is more hiddenness about the providence of God than there is about the grace of God. He has revealed much more clearly what He does and what He wills about our souls, than about our bodies. And though there are unfathomable depths everywhere, and God veils His dispensation, and does and must retire back from us often into the solitudes of His own unapproachable immensity—yet our spiritual blessings, our spiritual teachings, our spiritual privileges, and our spiritual obligations, have far fewer things in them

which we cannot read than our temporal. We thank God that it is so—that the doctrines we are to believe are more plainly laid out than the steps we are to take—that what concerns our heavenly life, though so much greater, is stated more explicitly than that which affects our earthly condition—and that our salvation has fewer difficulties in it than our daily walk and our daily bread.

This is the reason, perhaps, why faith always finds it so much harder work to trust for time than it does for eternity; and why there are so many who have no fear about their salvation, and yet who are hourly anxious about their daily wants.

This distinction between the degree of the mystery of providence and grace, underlies, as I think, my text. Let us look at it more closely. "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."

There is a climax and an anti-climax. Observe,—"way," "path," "footsteps." The way is greater than the path, the way is broad, the path is necessarily narrow, as in the familar verse, "In all thy ways," *i.e.*, in all thy great things, "acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy" little things, thy "paths"—"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths." While "footsteps" are smaller still than "paths"—little isolated marks lying here and there along the path: so it runs down—"way," "path," "footsteps."

Now see the ascending scale. "Thy way is in the sea,"—the sea classically is always shallow water;—"Thy path is in the great waters," which lie far out, more unfathomable than the shallows of the shore;—

while the "footsteps" are altogether out of sight, something beyond the sea, and beyond the great waters, utterly out of reach, they "are not known." "Thy way is in the sea, Thy path is in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."

So the smaller the thing the more inscrutable it becomes. And this picture is quite true to the fact. The "way" of God is His great plan and method of man's redemption—that which is often called in the New Testament "the way," or "this way,"—the widest and the loftiest marchings of the eternal mind.

The "path" of God is that which connects itself indeed with the way, but is less than the way, leading out from the way, leading into the way—it is the external government of this world, the general law which rules all events, that which God lays down for man in His lower works, the course of history.

While the "footsteps" of God are each distinct interposition of wisdom, power, love—the stamp He leaves upon facts, on spiritual circumstances.

And of each of the three that is said which we should least expect to be said. We can wade, but not very far, we can wade into evangelical truth,—we can follow a little an incident, though feebly,—we can skim the surface of God's administration of our world, but we can go no way at all, we cannot judge, we cannot read the works that God does, or one, till they are mapped, till we know what precedes and what follows,—though we can see something of the grand system of which each individual action is a part. "Thy way is in the sea, Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."

As respects all God's hidden ways, there are one or two things which we ought to consider.

First, lay this down,—God never meant you to understand them. We often add to the trouble of a concealed and perplexing providence, by thinking, "It is my fault that I cannot make it out," and trying to unravel it. That is not so. If you could master it, the mastery would be wrong. We should, if I may so say, in that case, have frustrated God's great intention, which was to school us by keeping us for awhile at least in the dark. It is quite true that we can interpret all God's acts better than David could. For "the least in the kingdom of God" — that is, the least instructed in the Christian dispensation, having Christ and the Holy Ghost—"is greater"—that is, in knowledge and power—than the greatest born of women under the old dispensation,—that is, John the Baptist. Still, the "walk by faith, and not by sight," is as much a part of the New as it was of the Old Testament. And we have nothing to do with lifting curtains. The sooner you accept, and the more you learn to love, and the more unquestioningly you rest in the mysteries of providence, not only the happier will you be, but the better you will carry out God's will, and the more you will glorify Him.

The reason that these things are mysterious does not lie in your ignorance—it does not lie in your want of prayer—it does not lie in your carelessness—it does not lie in your sin—but it lies in the essential necessity of the case, and in God's pre-determinate counsel.

Seeing, then, this is so, what are we to do? Seek the solution of hard problems, and the quelling of your

fears, and the answer to your doubts, not in the events themselves, but in the character of God;—not in the book of present history, but in the volume of the Scriptures. God has revealed Himself more than He has revealed His operations. Read him, read Him. In His being, in His attributes, you will find the truest explanation of a thousand difficulties. The right and childlike feeling of a Christian in such cases, is, "I do not know what Thou art doing, or what Thou art about to do, my Father, but I know Thee, and it is enough." For faith is the infancy of sight. I am not sure that when we get to heaven, it will be quite the same kind of seeing that we call seeing now, neither can I explain how faith developes into sight, but of this I am sure—that by believing, we learn to make ourselves capable to see.

But still, faith has its helps. It is a help that as we live on, if we consider, many things which were once fearful, involved, and hard, come out kind, simple, and plain; and we see, if not all, yet some of the reasons, and we are satisfied where we were once most dissatisfied,—and we justify God where we blamed Him most, even this side the grave. It ought to become easier to be a Christian as we grow old, if it were only for this, —that so much explains itself, and rectifies itself, as time runs on. Who would not say already that he has lived long enough to find the "way in the sea" the best way, and the "path" which once led him into deep "waters" the best path; and the "footsteps" which were and are now "unknown," the very safest and the best steps of all. And remember, the past stands sponsor for the future.

No doubt it will be a large part of the happiness of heaven to have the riddles of this world solved. Already, we have all of us contracted hundreds of questions by the way which we long to ask; and it will be a very delightful occupation to sit and get answers in that clear world, where it will not be the dancings and the flashings of a moving mirror, but we shall see the great originals of all things as they lay for ever in the mind of the Almighty.

Meanwhile, the darkened present drives us to our watch-towers. The eye ranges along the horizon, we look out of the lattice, and we long for His coming. Faith must speak where knowledge is dumb. Happy they who can turn from an uncertain now to a certain hereafter, and who, far beyond the nearer prospect, where it lies in mystery clouded, can look on to those far hills which stand so bright in the sunshine, and glimpse their shadowless home.

You must never forget that the glories of the wrapped goings of God, of which David speaks, were a part of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. It was the passage of the Red Sea which destroyed their enemies and left them free. Through those dark abysses, and those shuddering torrents, not one of the people of God but came out dry-shod.

And we are all in one great transit. And if now, in more than usual literalness, "the voice of God thunders in the heavens, and His lightnings lighten the world, and the earth trembles and shakes,"—if "His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known,"—it is because it is the Church's exodus; and every step we near that shore where the

love and the wisdom of God will all be vindicated, and where this will be the concert of every heart and of every voice, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

# Protection and Refuge:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, September 11th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."—PSALM xlvi. 11.

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EVERY religious man has had very much in his mind lately the thought of the God of armies. And doubtless one reason why nations now coalesce and now contend, why man is brought, from time to time, into such different relation to his fellow-man, is that he may study the God of that relation in both war and peace, —that we may know both the God of war and the God of peace. And so, while many, during the last weeks, have been seeing nothing but the muster and the march, the onslaught and the death-fray, the victory and the rout, the advancing wave of irresistible power, and the collapse of mighty armies, the Christian has stood reverently by, either asking himself the still

unanswered question, "What is God doing?" or trying modestly to scan the truth that "The battle is the Lord's;" and that far above the counsels and the powers of man, it is "His own right hand and His holy arm which hath gotten to Himself the victory."

Who has not had such verses as these come unbidden into his thoughts, and felt their fitness—"They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,"—"Scatter thou the people that delight in war?"

O that in this unhappy contest, alike the victors would lay down their banners at His feet, and acknowledge God and say, "The Lord of Hosts is with us,"—and the vanquished find in Him their comfort, and cry, "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

But turning from those whom it is not our province to judge, and from events not yet sufficiently developed to make clear the purpose of God, it is quite a right and natural thing that we should ask this question for ourselves,—Were our own country now to be plunged into war, could we justly take confidence from the conviction in which Hezekiah, who is generally supposed to have written this Psalm on his escape from the armies of Sennacherib—could we find our comfort where he found his triumph and his peace, and say, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge?"

God knows, and we know, that there is enough to humble us as a people and a church to the very dust, and that if we were this day inundated and slaughtered and made desolate even as France, we could only bow ourselves under the judgment and say, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

But to the praise and the glory of God's grace, thus much we may humbly venture to say—that seeing in our day, at least, whenever Protestantism has been arrayed against Popery, God has given the victory to Protestants—seeing that we do still—thank God as a nation, with what exceptions soever there may be—hold what we believe to be God's own simple truth—seeing that our church, though greatly marred with worldliness, and heresy, and division, and superstition, is nevertheless more full of life and knowledge in every part, God more recognised, services more frequent, sacraments more honoured, religious knowledge more diffused, every man, whatever his opinions may be, more earnest than at perhaps any other period of its history — seeing that our charities and religious societies are unprecedently large — seeing that the leaven of prayer and piety in the mass is very great — seeing that our missionary work throughout the world is so outspread and effective, and almost universal, that, humanly speaking, if England were blotted out of the map, the evangelization of the whole earth would suffer such a loss as could scarcely be repaired—seeing that our cause is so much bound up with God's cause, and that such blessing is in us still—seeing all this, may we not look out without fear, and assure ourselves in the Lord our God, and say, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

But now, more personally still, let us observe the power which there is in these words. First, in their combination.

"The Lord of Hosts:"—the name speaks of camps and armies. "The God of Jacob:"—Jacob was a plain man, living in tents; the type speaks of home and

quiet pursuits. Put the two together, and we have war and peace—"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Or, side by side, we have in perfect unity, assembled multitudes and a single individual—that He is the God alike of the many and the one—He compasses the vastest, but His eye is no less upon the smallest, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

In the heyday of success, it is the language of our joy; in the time of adversity, it is as much the confession of our escape. In the hour of struggle and temptation, when we have overcome, and come out "more than conquerors through Him that loved us"—and in the season of spiritual distress, when we know not where to flee from sin and from our consciences,—it meets the experience of the believer everywhere, and fits into the whole history of a man's soul: "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

And now let us separate it, that we may look at each more accurately.

There is always a feeling of solemnity in the sight of the unity and the order of great multitudes. I suppose it is the combination which it shows of physical beauty and moral power—mind exercising itself silently and grandly upon masses of matter. It is part of the pleasure which we have in looking up to the stars, vast systems of worlds, each one circling in a fixed orbit. It is the awe of the spectacle of the march of a great army. It is the sense which at once delights and overwhelms the mind, when we think of the leaves of the forest or the drops of an ocean—baffling the mind's utmost reach or calculation, yet each drop

and leaf obeying its own proper physical law, and all making one harmonious whole.

But still more, we have it in the angels, who, though not to the exclusion of the disciplined throngs of nature, are specially the hosts of God's world—"Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word," "Bless the Lord, all ye His host," "Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him all His Hosts." "Suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying." And to the full as much, we have it in those "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," who make up the great congregation of the saints before the throne, whose voices blend like the voice of many waters. And of all these countless ranges of natural, and spiritual, and glorified beings, moving each in their several degrees, and all in one perfect unison of obedience, grace, and love; we say, "They are the hosts of the Lord."

And I believe that that Lord is Jesus. Is it not He to whom the administration of the whole universe is committed? Is not He "the Chief" among the angels who minister all to Him and His members? Is He not the Captain of Israel, the Head of the Church, the King of saints? Is it not to Him that the everlasting gates lift up their heads, when the Church shall lead the triumphant procession up the hill of Zion, and the King of Glory shall come in? Therefore, in Christ, I see the commandment of all those vast fields of immensity and loveliness, and of Him we adoringly say, He is the God of Sabaoth, He is our Emmanuel,—"the Lord of Hosts is with us."

And remember that this presence is all our glory

and all our peace. The cross of Jesus is only a step, a means, to the presence of Jesus—which presence is as much better than that cross as life is better than death. For He died that He might rise, He rose that He might reign, He reigns that He may be in the midst of His own, to govern and to keep, and to bless them for ever.

And that presence is no solitary thing. Where it is, there are all things else that are good and beauteous—He is the centre of millions of invisible agencies which encompass Him — all nature subserves under Him in her manifold provisions—the whole angelic corps attend on His steps, and deploy at His bidding—where He is, His white-robed, perfected saints are, for how could they be divided? All that is pure and holy in all worlds follow Him—all that is worth the loving, and all that is worth the having, is there. Consider it well, you that are mourning—consider it well, you that are timid—"the Lord," with all His hosts, that innumerable throng, is around you—"The Lord of Hosts is with us."

But who is "the God of Jacob?" Who talked with Jacob at Bethel? Who wrestled with Jacob at Peniel? Let Jacob tell—"The God who fed me all my life long, unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil."

Now notice what that redeeming God of Jacob is. He is the God of election. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth—it was said unto her—The elder shall serve the younger,—as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

And this electing God of Jacob is the God of birth-

right and blessing. And so God ordered it in His sovereignty, "He took away my birthright, and now he hath taken away my blessing."

And He is the God of presence and of promise, the God of covenanted promises and grace to the fallen, the guilty, and the wanderer. Let that night at Bethel bear witness what God is to the fallen, the guilty, and the wanderer.

And He is the God of faithfulness, the God that never leaves nor forsakes, but keeps all His word, from the well of Haran to the brook Jabbok—all those long and weary years feeding, providing, guiding, restoring.

And He is the God that will be commanded concerning the work of His own hand, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And yet who humbles most where most He honours, for "Jacob halted on his thigh."

And He is the God who "when a man's ways please Him, maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him," for "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And He is the God who provides for troubles we know not of long before, making store-houses afar off, and who turneth "all things" which were "against" us, into "all things" which are for us.

And still He is the God who punishes us for our early sins all our life long, and makes us to eat the bitter fruit of the seed we sow in youth.

But still He is the God who is with us when we bow ourselves at the bed's head, and who gives us dying words to say, and dying peace to feel in dying hours, and brings us afterwards back to the Canaan we had loved, and left, and lost.

All this, and more, is "the God of Jacob," and "the God of Jacob is our refuge."

"Refuge"—it is what we all want and may soon want sorely—a refuge. For it is not always with us the tramp of confidence, and the bugle-note of hope, and the flush of victory—there is the defeat, and the humiliation, and the shame, and the loneliness, and the terror. And what shall we do if there is no "refuge?"—a refuge from conscience,—a refuge from memories which dog our steps everywhere—a refuge from the guilty past—a refuge from self—a refuge from a mighty and cruel adversary—a refuge from a sea of trouble—a refuge from a lowering future—a refuge from death, and fear, and judgment to come.

But thank God, there is a refuge, and that refuge is God Himself—not His promises, not His work, not His grace — Himself "a little sanctuary,"—Himself a "strong tower," into which we "run and are safe"—Himself a "covert from the tempest, when the blast of the terrible ones is like a storm against the wall,"—Himself, "the God of Jacob, is our refuge."

It is the glory of our country that we are the asylum of the nations. The sad, the homeless, and the desolate, come to us and they are safe. The God who shields from war is a kinder God than the God who gives victory to armies;—and to be a haven to the solitary and the outcast is a higher name and a better portion than to be the masters of the whole world. And happier still if this, our double mercy, lead us more to see His hand and accept His gospel, and make this all our creed, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

# Our Likeness to Little Children:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, September 18th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"For of such is the kingdom of heaven."—MATTHEW xix. 14.

WE should probably all agree not to accept the literal interpretation of this verse, though it carry the authority of Baxter—that the number of persons who die in early childhood being so very large, and all going into heaven, and all continuing to be children there, even as they die here, therefore that infants in heaven must be a very large proportion of those in heaven, and that the text is physically and literally true, "Of *infants* is the kingdom of heaven."

Rather we are inclined to understand it that Christ here used the expression, "The kingdom of heaven," in the sense in which He most commonly employed it, and that while it does not exclude what we usually call heaven, it does, in fact, comprehend both provinces of the empire, and relates to the kingdom of grace as much as to the kingdom of glory, being the whole Church-state, both militant and triumphant; and that it is as though He said, "Of such is the Church."

And it is evident that in this sense only can we treat it practically—that a Christian must be like a little child.

And assuredly, there is very great cause why we should press this thought upon ourselves now. For we are fallen on most unchild-like days. The very children are not child-like. Nothing is too hard, nothing is too sacred, nothing is too deep for little children—they judge, they criticise, they condemn. The respectfulness which was once — where is it? Veneration is a thing of the past. The fifth commandment is being fast blotted out. They love, dearly love, but they do not honour. I speak, of course, generally, and subject to many beautiful exceptions; and perhaps that is true in this which applies to everything in this generation—What is good is better than ever it was. But is it not the characteristic of the age we live in, that even children are not in the highest sense of the word, child-like? So that is it not a happy thing for us that the model which Christ sets before us is not a child, such as we are generally familiar with, but a very little child indeed, almost a babe? That is the original we are set to copy, and that almost necessarily remains unsophisticated and unchanged in every generation.

Let me entreat you, my dear children, let me entreat you to be more respectful—let me entreat you to put more awe into your religion. You want it—you will not please God until you are more respectful to men, and show more awe towards God.

But among grown-up persons, it is equally true that we have grown sadly unchild-like. An age partially, but not entirely, educated — rather, but not very, learned—an age of transition — an age proud of its science and its talent—a fast age—can never be a

child-like age. We ought not, therefore, to be surprised, perhaps, that no one, except those who are really learned, is content now to take simple views about anything—that all is matter of argument and dispute—that almost everything is being pushed into an extravagance and an excitement—that religion is made common-place—that the deepest mysteries of our faith are unholily familiarized—that everybody is a teacher, everybody is a judge, everybody is an orator. Oh! I can imagine, if Jesus were again with us upon earth now, how He would set a little child in the midst of this congregation, and with more emphasis than before He would say, "Except you be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And yet, brethren, indeed, increasing experience of my own heart, and of the hearts of others, tells me this—that the reason why we get on so very badly in our spiritual life—why we have so few answers to prayer—why the Holy Communion is not more with us—why so many sins and faults have hold upon us—why the Church is so feeble and distracted—is this, We are not low enough, we are not little enough, we are too independent, we are too great, we are too set-up. But God will never deal with you while you are in that state, that uplifted state, that self-satisfied state—and never will you have the presence of the peace which you might have, and never will the Church be knit again till you are content to go back to what now lies long behind, and to sit low, much lower than you are sitting now, and to be simply a very little child.

And now let us look at some of the features which we have to copy.

And first, as respects faith. No one can have had much to do with a very young child without being

struck with the particular character of its trust. I say trust rather than faith, because, in nine cases out of ten, trust is the right word, and the more exact translation of the original. The trustfulness of a child is very great—in one aspect, too great. Yet who ever wished the trust of a child to be less ?

The chief reason why a child's trust is so great is, that it has nothing to do with the intellect—it is simply affection—it believes because it loves, and leans because it is fond.

There is a great deal of true philosophy here. Faith is not a thing of the understanding. What you understand is, to a great extent, by the very fact that you understand it, taken out of the province of faith. Faith is a feeling of the heart, and the more you love, the more you will believe. Hence the large faith of a little child.

And now I come to the point of the lesson. You cannot know infinitely, but you can love infinitely. If the faith be in proportion to the knowledge, it can never be very great. If the faith be in proportion to the love, it will be exceedingly great. Why have you such difficulty about faith ? Because you are looking for it in your mind, you base it upon your intellect. Be content only to feel, and it will grow. So the credulity, as it has been called, of a child, illustrates the faith of the man. He accepts absolutely whatever is said to him,—he asks no questions,—he does not stop to reason,—it is enough, " My father, my mother, my brother, my sister, has told me—it is a very wonderful thing he has told me ; but for them to deceive me would be a more wonderful thing than any other wonder there could be in the world." Therefore he believes everything.

But observe, he has loved first—his love is the

measure of his trust. But you will say, A child will believe a stranger. Yes, because he loves those at home, and he has not yet learnt not to pass on to everybody his home affections. Therefore love is his faith always.

When you sit down to read your Bible, and when you are dealing with the promises,—determine to be a little child,—look up into your Father's face, and feel, "My Father says this; and of all marvels, the most impossible marvel is that my Father should mock me, that He should say it and not mean it, or that He should say it to me now, and not mean it to me." If you begin to speculate about what inspiration is—how much this passage is inspired—if you turn critical —if you split hairs—if you are in the least degree metaphysical—if you trouble yourself about your being not worthy—if you think how you must think, or feel whether you are feeling at all, there will be all at an end a happy faith—at least, the more you do that, the weaker and the less influential your faith will be.

But you say, To believe in that unintelligent way is not the part of a rational being. I can only answer, it is the way a little child does. The more intellectual you are, as such, the more you are like the devil. The more loving you are, as such, the more you are like God. A little child has most love, and therefore is most in the image of God. Therefore it is that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

On the same principle it is that little children live so delightfully in the present moment. They have few memories, and what future there is, is all sunny. The present is almost everything, and therefore they can throw themselves into the present with intensity. A child's joy is always longer than a child's sorrow.

I wish we could all do the same—have very few re-

trospects and no dark anticipations, and no anxieties. Then what energy it would give, what ecstasy to to-day's duty, to-day's cross, to-day's pleasure—and how free the soul would be for the real to-morrow of eternity.

Look, look how quickly, how instantaneously a child must have whatever it feels it has a right to have, and do whatever it lies in its little heart to do. And why do we put such great intervals, and make such long delays? Why do not we command a Father's promise the minute He gives it? Why do not we leap to whatever we find upon our hearts to do?

A child's mind has a wonderful power of realization. Whatever is said to it, it does more than picture it, it makes substance of it, and immediately it becomes a living thing to the child.

And this is just what we ought to do about the invisible world. The unseen is really more than the seen. Those are the substances—these are the shadows. And yet, let me ask, who treats what he cannot touch, and see, as he does the material world around him? To whom is the inner voice of the Spirit in his conscience like the voice of a man which he hears addressing him in the road? To whom is Satan like an actual enemy of flesh and blood with whom he is fighting? To whom is a promise like a note which is presented for payment at the bank? To whom is heaven like an estate of which he has just got possession a little way off? To whom is the cross as an event of life of which he himself is the subject and the centre? To whom is that water and that blood as streams which are flowing over him? Who holds the protection of angels as if he saw an army about him? To whom is the presence of Christ like a brother always at his side? Who looks for the Advent as he expects the return of a friend?

Little children may be angry, but their anger never lasts. The sun does not go down upon it. And this is probably what that means, "Howbeit in malice be ye children." It is the difference between anger, which is short and which is God-like,—and malice, which is long and can never be right.

Every little child is innocent — not in the sense which "innocent" now bears, "without sin," for every child of Adam brings sin with him into the world, but in the true meaning of the word, the meaning that our Prayer-book intends, and God intends it—innocuous—he cannot hurt.

O that it could be said of each of us, He cannot hurt; such is his character and temper, such his self-restraint, such his moral being, he could not hurt—not by word or by deed, mind or body, he could not hurt anyone.

Little children, as a rule, are very generous with their possessions—though a thing possessed is to a child a greater possession than it is to a man. And why do we live on and get selfish, and hold our possessions so tightly?

The sympathy of a child is perfect. To a tear or a smile, it responds in a moment.

Alas to think—We were all of us tender once! Has all that life has given to us since been well purchased on the condition of this hard heart?

A little child is carried. He is content, and more than content, to be undertaken for in everything.

We have all grown to a miserable independence—we must go back, we must go back, before we can go to heaven. If ever we are to enter there, we shall enter carried, carried. Then why not lean now where we must be carried then—on the bosom of Christ?

I will only add one thing more. A little child is a

thing new-born. It has new feelings, in a new world, and its education for the new world to which it has come is going on very fast—faster, probably, than at any other period of its existence, and its delight in this new world is fresh and keen.

So it must be with you. You must be born again. Your baptism makes no exception to this. Your baptism was the sign, and the pledge, and the lesson-book of a new birth—your baptism was intended to be the channel, and the means, and the occasion of your new birth. If so, well. Then you are born again. But if not, if morally, and religiously, and practically, you find no change,—if you are conscious that all that is in you is born of the flesh, and is flesh, and that that which is in you is not born of the Spirit, and is not Spirit, — then I say now, this day, as much as if I was preaching to unbaptized heathens, "You must be born again." There must be a change, call it what you like, regeneration, conversion—there must be a change, as deep and thorough as if you were entering into a new world. You have yet to pass through struggle and through mystery into a new state and a new being, which will bring with it new objects, new relationships, new sorrows, new joys, new tastes. You must yet occupy a position in which you will be as a babe lying upon the threshold of life, as little, as helpless, as nothing, as cared for, as loved. Brethren, do not deceive yourselves. This great change is a reality, and it must be, it must be. You must, probably, become exactly the opposite to what you are at this moment, that is, a little child. Without it, you will never be saved, for "of such," and only such, "is the kingdom of heaven."

# Peace in High Places:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, September 25th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"He maketh peace in His high places."—JOB xxv. 2.

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WHEN every heart is beating high for peace, and it is the ruling thought in every man's mind, and almost the first word on every man's lips, it would be strange if I did not take it as my key-note to-day; and it becomes a natural and well-nigh a necessary thing in this place to pass from the peace of nations to the peace of every man's own soul. For, after all, what does it matter whether it be war or peace between kings—solemn and momentous as that subject is—compared with the vital, and eternal, and all-absorbing question,—"Is there peace between my heart and God?"

Still, it is a moment when the Church, and every member of it, should be beseeching God's mercy-seat for that inestimable gift of public peace. Surely it is the very crisis for prayer. For who can have watched, even during the last few weeks, the course of affairs, without having the strongest conviction impressed upon his mind that the work which is being done upon the earth, God is doing it Himself. It will not be by the conclaves of statesmen, nor by political sagacity, that the matter now pending will be decided; but by the purposes of God, and the counsels of His eternal mind.

But if I might suggest one or two special heads for prayer, they will be these:—First, that God would imbue the minds on either side with that spirit of "moderation" to be "known unto all men," without which peace cannot be.

Secondly, that whatever happens, God will not allow our own country to be drawn into the conflict; but keep us in peace.

Thirdly, that our own hearts, each one, may not be tempted secretly, or in the least degree, to wish a continuance of this war. Is not there, brethren, a need for this caution? For the drama of such a war as this is so intensely interesting,—and the excitement of the observation of it, despite all its horrors, so pleasurable,—and the daily stimulus of it grows into such a necessity, that is there not a danger that peace may seem a tame thing, and that we, without daring to say it, and almost without being conscious of the feeling, may have a desire that this awful tragedy should yet have a few more acts before the curtain falls? Therefore, because such are the paradoxes and such

the subtleties of the human mind, ask God to incline, as all other hearts, so yours, to peace.

And fourthly, pray that, come what may, we may accept it as from Him—that by whatever means He pleases, God may honour His own truth, and glorify His own most holy name.

In our supplications for anything, it is a great matter if we can carry, when we pray, a firm belief that we are asking what is according to the will of God. And I think that this may give confidence to your prayers now for peace, that under the mystery of this war, God must have had some special design, and that, as far as we can judge, that great design is already, in a great measure, fulfilled. For the man, who, above all others, upheld the temporal power of Popery having been now removed—and immediately upon that man being taken out of the way, Popery itself having been degraded in its social position, and humbled in the very hour of its most egregious pride—we may hope and believe that one great end which God had in view in this strange and awful war has been accomplished, and that, therefore, we are now asking what is after God's mind, when we ask for peace.

But now, to reduce the subject more immediately to our own spiritual life. There are two possible senses in which the text can be accepted.

One, that God Himself, "sitting in His high places," there "makes peace" by acts of His own omnipotence: —"He, in His high places, maketh peace."

The other, that God, however it may be in other parts of His empire, "makes peace" to reign "in His *high* places," that is, in the stars, and among the angels—"He maketh peace in His *high* places."

The two, however, are equally true, and they perfectly blend. God on His high throne in the heaven of heavens, Himself makes the peace of those loftier ranges in nature and intelligence, where alone, as yet, any perfect peace is to be found.

And it is well for us sometimes to look up, and think of the order and tranquillity that reigns in those higher spheres—in the services of angels, and the silent, harmonious circles of those worlds of light, till, by meditation, we learn the more to aspire after their perfections, and catch something of their quietude.

I believe that it is want of real peace of mind—that is, peace with God—which lies at the root of almost everything—which makes life not happy.

Why do all your efforts to be a better Christian and lead a more consistent religious life, gradually die away, and come to nothing? Tell me another thing, —why do the leaves and the flowers fall off in your nosegay, and in your *parterre?* Because there is either no root; or if root at all, a root not deep enough and quiet enough. Therefore they fall; and therefore your good resolutions and your spiritual enterprises do not last; but they prematurely die, because they are not laid in peace—in an assured conviction that you are pardoned, and that God loves you. Your mind is not still enough for holy things.

Or, let me ask you again—What causes that restlessness of feeling which follows you wherever you go, and which leaves you satisfaction in nothing you enjoy and nothing you do? Why have you so many pleasures, but so little comfort? Your soul has not found a resting-point—your inward dependence is not firm, and your spiritual allegiance is not true.

Or, let me ask another thing. When do you find your temper get the better of you? When you are uncomfortable with yourself, and when you feel a void and a sinking within, because that which ought to be there is not there—and you are irritable to God and irritable to your own heart, because things are not right between that heart and God. You blame a thousand things, but the real culprit of more than half the vexations, and disquietudes, and failures of life, is an imperfect, that is, an unpeaceful, religion.

Let me tell you one or two of the secrets of peace.

Peace is a creation every morning, a new creation. Its source is the bosom of God—its mould is the counsel of God—its fabric is the attributes of God—its safeguard is the presence of God—its exercise is the will of God—its end is the glory of God.

We often speak of making our peace with some one with whom we have been at variance. With man, in a sense, you may, but with God, never, never. We never, properly speaking, make our peace with God. We accept a peace which God has created. "He maketh peace in His high places."

And how does He make it? In His own calm and holy mind, God had a thought of a world of peace, and it came forth from His hand in all its beautiful order and degrees, and "it was very good," and "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The peace of Eden was broken up, according to the foreknowledge of God, to make way for the introduction of another peace which should be higher still. The Man, the great prototype of all men, the Man, who united in His own person the image of God and the likeness of Adam, planned from all

eternity that peace, and He removed all the elements of discord between the creature and the Creator, and in His own person He exhausted them all; He harmonized, to human comprehension, the prerogatives of a pure and loving God, which sin had thrown on our side, into confusion; "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other." By that blood, which satisfies all demands, a peace, not by the will and counsel of two contracting parties, but by the fiat of One, a perfect peace between every sinner's soul and God, to the end of time, was made.

So far, the peace was then and is now, a finished work, which needs no supplement, admits no addition; the white flag of everlasting truce is held out to this world, with no other condition but the terms of an absolute surrender. But we see not all peace as yet. As yet, man is not at peace with himself, and is not yet towards God. As yet, man is not at peace with his fellow-man. As yet, the lower creation is not at peace between themselves or with us. As yet, the enmity goes on in all the material world—till He comes. Then, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,"—for the peace will be absolute and universal. Not one discordant instinct, not one human passion to ruffle the surface of the world's deep tranquillity. No love of conquest, no deep revenge, no cruel shout of victory, no wail of the wounded, no tear for the slain; nor sea, nor famine, nor sword, nor spear. Why? "The peace of the high places" will have come down to earth; all

will love one another because all love God. And the creation of God will then, and not till then, be done. He will cease from His work, and the Sabbath of this earth will begin.

And why, why is it now peace among the angels? Why is it peace among the planets? They move in perfect obedience to two great laws—one law sending them on in their course, another law attracting and holding them to their centre—and the centrifugal and the centripetal forces are both so strong and so blended, that their orbits they cannot leave, and from that centre they cannot part. Therefore it is "peace in high places."

And O that it were so with us—a mission to move, and a Christ to reach;—work, Jesus—to each his own orbit, and to all their one common centre.

Remember it well, brethren, that peace of every kind is the handiwork of God. He has woven it out of His attributes, and He has placed a model of it in the material and the spiritual heavens. Do you want peace in your mind? Accept it as a complete creation, a work done for you, a gift ready to your hand, a thing finished. Do you still find your peace wanting? Go and make yourself a compass of duty, and place Jesus in the point in which the whole of that circle radiates, and you will have peace.

Is your house not a united one? Is yours not a happy home, because all in it are not agreed? Act upon two principles. First, lay down this axiom—"It is God that maketh men to be of one mind in a house." Ask Him to create peace in your house. And then take care to put Christ in His proper place, "in the high places,"—for your house now wants a

centre. What would be the condition of the heavenly bodies, what would be the anarchy of the heavenly host, without a centre? Therefore, do not go about to try lesser methods, but make a centre, and let the centre of your house be Christ.

In like manner, recollect now that the foundation-truth of these anxious times is this—that the peace of nations lies in the omnipotence of God. It is His prerogative to "turn the sword into the ploughshare." And what is wanting to make the concord of nations is a national recognition of God. And a true bond of union between countries is religious truth and a unity of faith.

Therefore, whatever others do, do you regard peace not so much as the subject of diplomacy, or a matter for conclaves, but as a thing of the Church's action, for prayer, for faith, for humiliation.

And even while we speak, while kingdoms pause and rulers debate, it is pleasant to know—and let faith command it—that at this very moment, God is busy within the veil about this very thing—the whole Trinity comes down to its creation, and He is "making peace in His high places."

# The House of Prayer:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, October 2nd, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."—ISAIAH lvi. 7.

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TWICE in His short ministry—once almost at its very beginning, and once almost at its very end—Christ purified the temple. And on the second occasion, and on the second occasion only, He quoted these words, with this variation, according to St. Luke's account, that He said "Mine house *is*"—not "shall be called"—"Mine house is a house of prayer."

What the object of Christ's purification of the temple was is clear. It was two-fold. It was chiefly, of course, a jealous defence of the dignity and purity of His Father's house. It was also more. The overthrow of the table of the money changers, and the driving out those that sold doves, leads on to it, and the quotation from Isaiah establishes it, that one object was to show that the great use of the

church, at least from that time, was not sacrifice but prayer. And in this reference, it is remarkable that He used the words "house of prayer" only at that cleansing which immediately preceded His death, that great sacrifice which was at once to do away with all other sacrifice, and to open the true spiritual worship of God and the privileges of the Church to the whole world.

To what period, indeed, Isaiah's prophecy exactly relates, admits of a doubt, probably in the case of this, as of many predictions, the complete fulfilment has not yet come. It is to be believed that there will yet be a time when, in a sense hitherto unknown, all people will go to worship at Jerusalem. And if it be asked, What then is meant by that context—"Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people?"—I would answer with Bishop Lowth, and with Calvin, two very high authorities, that these words, "burnt offerings and sacrifices," are here used as familiar Jewish metaphors, intended to convey only the idea that they would present to a Hebrew mind—praise, prayer. For to suppose that all people shall again offer Jewish sacrifices would contradict the whole of the New Testament, and be opposed to the very genius and essence of our faith.

That the words do, however, also apply to the present Christian dispensation, is, we may assume, evident from the fact that Christ Himself used them at its institution. Therefore the purification of the temple was partly for the removal of abuses which had crept into its services, and partly for the appointment of God's house to be a place of universal prayer.

Now what Christ did with such repetition and such earnestness, ought not His ministers sometimes to do, and try to bring back God's house to its true and highest purpose of prayer? Permit me, therefore, with this object in view, to say a few words to you this morning. The growing necessity of some caution and advice upon the subject, will, I think, be a fair justification.

For consider a moment—Is not it a fact that with a certain and a large class of minds, God's house has become, to a very great extent, rather a house of preaching than a house of prayer? In proof of which, if proof be required, look at three things. See the miserable smallness of the congregation when there are only the prayers—would this be if this house were really regarded as a house of prayer? Then, notice how in all the churches, the attendance varies according to the preacher. And further, let almost every one look into his own heart, and say, is not his interest more awakened, and is not his mind more fixed in the sermon than it was in the prayers? And all this—the difference of the numbers in attendance when there is a sermon and when there is not—the fluctuations of the congregation in all the churches, according to the popular powers of the ministry—the fascination which the sermon, if it 'be only not a very poor one, exercises over the mind in comparison with the prayers—does not all this prove that this house is to very many persons, characteristically, not a house of prayer, but a house of preaching?

Now take another large and growing section of the Church. To them the music stands out predominant: as are the vocal and instrumental parts of the worship

of praise, so is the service to them. They find their feelings and affections drawn out so much more by the music than by anything else, that naturally, they think most of this. Their pleasure is there, and they choose their church mainly in reference to the music.

Do I say, then, the love of preaching is wrong? I believe that very many persons indeed, misunderstand what is meant by preaching in the Bible. Preaching in the scriptural sense, is evangelizing, that is, declaring the gospel to those who have not heard it. What I am now doing is not strictly preaching, it is rather, if you like to call it so, teaching, or warning, or counselling, or comforting. What I say to you is never, properly, evangelizing—and the promises made to preaching in the Bible do not accurately belong to this. Nevertheless, in bringing souls of baptized Christians really to Christ, I believe preaching to be so blessed of God, and to be so very efficacious, that all other means of conversion whatsoever are not to be named with preaching. What do not thousands and tens of thousands owe to preaching? God forbid that I should depreciate that honoured ordinance of preaching.

But, do I say that the music of churches is wrong? I believe here, indeed, again, that a very great many persons mistake the sentiment awakened by the sweetness, or the grandeur, or the melody of sound, for a real religious feeling, and for the love of God. I see plainly the danger and the snare which is being set, that we bring secular taste and criticism into the sanctuary, and turn the church into a concert room.

But yet, what part of our worship goes so near to heaven as our sacred psalmody? When are we so close in communion with angels and with saints? What

brings us so one again with those we love, and who are worshipping now for a little while away from us? What kindles so much the slumbering fires that are within us? Or what expresses so eloquently the sorrows, or the joys, or the affections, or the gushings of a Christian heart? Music is a holy and beautiful thing; it is a gift and a talent made to be consecrated. And very pleasant it will be to God when all voices and congregations, set to one note of love, and vibrating with the same inner pulse of throbbing praise, go up like the sound of many waters.

But what we have now to do with is proportion. If the preaching overlays and crushes the prayers,—if the music dulls the other parts of the service, and makes them tame—then the proportion is broken, and God's purpose is neutralized; for that which ought to be first is then second, the most important is the least appreciated, and Christ's prophetic command is not kept, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."

And if to those to whom the preaching is everything,—and to those to whom the music is everything,—you add those to whom everything is nothing,—who go to church only as a custom, or a fashion, or a display, or a form,—who do not really sing with the singing, or pray with the praying, or listen to the sermon,—how very few will the real lovers of our prayers be found!

And yet once more. Even of those who do indeed mean and try to pray in spirit and in truth, what would be their own testimony respecting all the distractions, and all the wandering thoughts, which fritter away those prayers till they become almost a cypher? If

we were only to calculate that when any one's thoughts went out of church, he were to go too, what a handful would be left before the service had gone on five minutes! If we counted those only to be prayers which really carry the heart and the understanding along with them, then what mockery would those words of our Lord be, if they were written upon our walls, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."

It is obvious, therefore, that some suggestions respecting our service of public prayer cannot be out of place; and to this subject I propose, if it please God, to address myself next Sunday.

Meanwhile, let me remind you that there are four kinds of prayer.

Inward, secret, ejaculatory prayer,—the highest, the very highest,—the spirit and atmosphere of prayer, which alone fulfils the command, "Pray without ceasing;" and to which all other prayer in the world is only a means.

Then, there is the private prayer of our own room, to feed that universal spirit of prayer,—for which no public prayer can ever be a substitute,—and which must never be given up for the sake of any other prayer whatsoever—the day's provision and the day's strength—the night's safety and the night's peace, which our Lord Himself so expressly retained and blessed, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Then there is family prayer—recognising that great broad principle, that in whatever combination or con-

nexion God's providence ever places us together, in that combination and that connexion we must acknowledge Him as a parent, so avoiding that most solemn denunciation to all parents, and all masters of houses, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that call not upon Thy name."

And then there is public prayer, without which we "forsake the assembling of ourselves together," which is that meeting of the "two or three," which claims the promise of the presence, and that particularly when by liturgy, we agree beforehand, in a way which scarcely can be done without a liturgy, touching the things which we are going to ask, resting upon the assurance that then it shall be done for us—which approaches the nearest of all prayer to the exercises of heaven. For I see no reason at all to say with some that there will be no prayer in heaven, but rather the contrary—seeing that where there is desire, there must be prayer—for desire before God is prayer—and "these things the angels *desire* to look into." And all prayer in heaven, like all the worship of heaven, as far as we know, must be social.

Of these four kinds of prayer, then, all are so excellent, and each has such separate argument for itself, that none can be neglected without serious detriment to the soul, and great dishonour done to God.

But I would have you to recognize always the true nature and the dignity of all prayer—prayer is the expression to God of what He has Himself dictated to the soul. More, prayer is the channel which God opens by which He may give what He Himself has dictated to the soul for this very purpose, because He

means and desires to give it. In every prayer—which is really prayer, the whole Trinity meets. It has the Father for its object, the Son for its medium, the Holy Ghost for its author. The Son before the throne, presents and makes acceptable to the Father what the Spirit has prompted and inspired; and if any one of those three things be wanting, the prayer is not.

Therefore, it is no light and common-place thing to pray. The deepest doctrines of our faith are in prayer; the immensities of the mysteries of the Godhead are in prayer. When I think of this, I do not wonder that there are so few who pray; I do not wonder that a house, all of prayer, is such a strange and rare phenomenon, that I doubt whether it is to be found upon this earth; I do not wonder that when a man really prays, all heaven looks on with marvel and admiration, "Behold, he prayeth!"

# Public Worship:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, October 9th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."—Is. lvi. 7.

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If we tarry a little longer to-day on the character and the duties of public worship, you must remember that there are times when a builder must attend even to the scaffolding of the house which he wishes to erect.

Whatever may be the particular excellencies of all the other means of prayer which we were considering last Sunday, no one will deny that our public assemblies for divine service are the field-days of prayer. Then the whole army of those militant on earth are required to gather themselves together, and all is to be done with more than usual order, unity, and zeal. Would that in this—and O in how many other things besides—our Church retained more of its ancient and long-lost discipline and fervour.

Towards the right conduct and the effectiveness of a church's prayers, there will be no difference of opinion amongst us, that a liturgy is not only of the greatest value, but an essential element. For while every man for himself can best express his own wants and feelings in his own words, and while, perhaps, in family worship, or in small companies of worshippers, one mind may grasp and give utterance to the thoughts and the necessities of all; still, as the number increases, so also does the difficulty increase. And when the number is great, no man, however gifted, can at all times truly represent in prayer all the hearts of which he is the exponent.

And even could he do so, it is plain that what one man says in prayer before a congregation, whatever it may be to his own mind, is to all who follow him a form, as much a form as if he read it out of a book.

And it may be at once a thought of comfort to those who use a prayer book in church, and an answer to those who object to it, as hindering and cramping the Holy Ghost, that our blessed Master—who had the Spirit without measure—never prayed, when He was upon earth, in any place of worship, without a form of prayer. For the service of the synagogue, which it was His habit to attend, most closely resembled our own —consisting of eighteen collects or prayers, two lessons taken out of the Bible, and a sermon, such as we know our Saviour Himself delivered in the synagogue of Nazareth.

Those, therefore, who object to a form of prayer because it is a form, cannot escape form by the extemporaneous prayer of any single person; and they who hold it grieves the Spirit of God, condemn their Master.

To the inimitable beauty, and power, and compre-

hensiveness of our liturgy, not the Church only, but the whole world bears testimony. And even those who deny the expediency and even the legitimacy of a form, consent with one voice, that if there is to be a liturgy, there could not be a better than ours. Who has ever come up to church, with any want or burden upon his heart, who has not felt that want met, or that burden lightened? Who has not proved the soothing and the elevation, the warmth and the energy, and the quietness which there is in the moral dignity, and the holy fire of our most evangelical formularies? Who that has used it long enough, and earnestly enough, has not again and again blessed God for the wisdom approaching to inspiration, which He gave to the compilers of our book of Common Prayer?

But public prayer, such as we use in this place, if it has its privileges, has also its responsibilities. Public prayer differs from private prayer. In private prayer a person's duty and privilege is to think very much, and almost altogether, about himself; or about some one or two others who are to him as himself. He draws from his own heart, and is the centre of his own petitions. In public prayer it is just the opposite. We pray collectively. No one ought to think about himself and his own little circle—it is all plural. We should look around us, and take in everybody. The larger the embrace of your mind, the more you carry out the spirit and intention of what you are doing. It is in this way "a house of prayer for all people." For "all people" ought to be in every prayer. And if we were only catholic enough here, we could afford to be individual enough in our own closets; and, if we were only individual enough in our closets, we could afford to be catholic enough in church.

I do not think people appreciate enough this dis-

tinction. You come up and pray in church as if you were praying alone; but you are here as one of a body—not solitary—and you pray and praise as members together in one body. I do not say that there may not and there ought not to be individuality and self underlying the words you say; but all our petitions and all our thanksgivings in this place are meant to be one great partnership. As one family we meet—as one family we ought to feel and speak—for the genius of public worship is largeness of soul.

There is another point to which I wish to draw your attention. It belongs to a liturgy, and to a liturgy only, to enlist and engage the co-operation of the whole congregation. Not only do the people accompany the minister, but the people and the minister here have each their own proper, separate parts. This is the exclusive characteristic of liturgical prayer.

Perhaps it has not occurred to you to observe that at least one-third of our service it belongs to you only to say. And it is as much your duty to say yours, as it is my duty to say mine.

Is this fact remembered and realized amongst us? I think not; and yet it is the very essence of worship. Do I officiate? Do not you also? Am I a priest? In this sense, God Himself bearing witness, are not you priests also? Ought I to speak distinctly, earnestly, all I have to speak? And ought not you also? No mouth has a right to be shut, no member of a congregation has a right to stand by as though the prayers belonged to the clergyman, or the singing belonged to appointed singers. The exhortation, the absolution, the reading of the Bible, the sermon, the benediction, are the minister's only. All the rest we have in common. In all the rest, your thoughts are with the

minister; and in one-third, at least, you should speak those thoughts audibly. And oh! what would be the life and the animation, what the variety, what the sweetness, what the prevalence of our services, if with an audible voice, and a distinct speech, and a fervent heart, all took their part and none were silent. Only could you once make the experiment, and see what a service it would be then; you would want no more urging—it would be so beautiful, so elevating, so near to heaven!

But remember, it depends on you, it depends on each one's own conscience, resolution, and effort. Some churches have their gorgeous display,—some have their exquisite music,—some have their eloquent preaching; but let our attraction be reality, unity, order, holiness—the burst of response,—the swell of praise,—the wave of voice,—the outgoings of earnest souls,—the deep, full utterances of the heart. So shall that be true again, "Mine house shall be called the house of prayer"—for whom? for the priest? for the pew? "Mine house shall be called the house of prayer for all people."

Let me add one or two suggestions in detail. Whatever you do, always kneel when you pray, unless want of strength prevent it—really, honestly kneel—do not bend, but kneel. It is a constant grief to your minister,—it is a constant grief to every pious member of this congregation, and must be displeasing to God, because disrespectful, to see how very few in this church really kneel when they pray. If your posture is slovenly, everything will be slovenly. Do not forget to whom you are speaking—what He is, and what you are; and let your attitude pray.

There is one section of our Church which surpasses us and puts us to shame in the reverence of posture

that they take in prayer; and we should do very well to copy it. If they have run into any excess in this matter, is not it because they want to escape our deficiencies? We want devoutness—that feature of angels, that stamp of saints, that element of heaven. There is very little danger, in this congregation, of too much reverence of posture—is there not a danger of too little? I strongly urge you to kneel—not half sit—kneel, when you pray.

A little longer prayer, both before and after service, would be well for most of you, if only it be as it ought to be—not for effect, but sustained prayer. Remember, it is the only part of your prayers here which is properly individual.

Whatever you feel to be a weak part of our service, throw yourselves into that part, to strengthen and to raise it. I might easily specify such parts; for, alas, they are very many; but your own ear and your own heart will best tell you. I will only particularize one in which we are very weak—the Amens.

Every one should feel it incumbent upon him, personally, to take care that there be no tameness and feebleness in any portion of our service. It is committed to your custody, and the Church is accountable for the Church's worship. Do not go away and say, "It was dull to-day" Who made it dull? But ask God to forgive you, that your own soul, and your own lips, had so little life. And when you go next to church, determine that, as far as in you lies, there shall be no poverty.

In singing, there are very few who cannot and who ought not to join—softly, all softly, but every one audibly. Remember,—in this church, the whole congregation is the choir. And if the congregation is the choir, I am persuaded that it is the best choir of all.

Many of you would be more ready and able to join in the singing, if you practised the tunes during the week. I speak in this to the poor as well as to the rich. Practice the tunes during the week. And if you will have the kindness, you may always have the tunes of the organist or of me.

I wish this church could be open much oftener,—I wish that it could be open daily. But till it is, I earnestly wish and pray that there were that heart in you, whenever it is open, (barring any great cause of absence,) you were all of you here, to enjoy this particular kind of prayer, which you can enjoy nowhere else—to fortify your prayers by union and number—to recognise the Church's corporate existence—to ask in common what you in common want, and to praise in common for your common mercies—so rehearsing the assemblies of heaven, and the worship of its hosts.

For, indeed, a true "house of prayer for all people," if we only made it so, would be the best porch to the temple of eternal praise. And if we only did worship God in the ardour and the beauty of holiness, how would that promise made to this very house be fulfilled day by day—"In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

I cannot conclude, to-day, without taking your thoughts with me for a moment from this house of prayer to him under whose auspices it was built thirty-two years ago. For it is no small thing, and it ought to have its voice, when a man who has presided over a parish forty-six years, is taken away from it. To him we owe a debt of reverence and love—all to his high place and his holy office, and many of us to his personal character and his many acts of kindness.

It has been my privilege, in my ministry, to serve three masters; but none kinder and more considerate

than he. His singular energy, and talent, and force, were patent to the whole world; and many are the monuments of his untiring zeal and his free charity which this parish can show.

But few, except those who have been brought into an inner circle, know that tenderneesss of heart, and that gentleness, almost feminine, which characterized him no less, and which stood in such unusual combination with his remarkable firmness of will and purpose.

I believe every one who ever came into close contact with him loved him. All his own clergy, without an exception, feel to him the most grateful affection, and his household were very much attached to him.

Through life, the exactness and the probity of all his dealings was so very great, that it might be almost said of him literally, "His righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." In many things, he has left us a clear example which we should do well to copy.

Respecting his last days and weeks on earth, I will not draw aside the curtain further than to say this—that every word he breathed was a word expressive of the deepest sense of sin, and the most simple and absolute casting of himself on the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. Almost his last words to me were, "I trust in nothing but in Christ only."

And when my own hour comes to die, I hope that there may be grafted in me a spirit as childlike, as humble, as penitent, as jealous of its own sincerity, as that with which that strong, brave man met his God.

# Not Left Comfortless:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, October 23rd, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."—JOHN xiv. 18.

THIS is one of those grand undertakings of Christ, so simple, so real, so large, that they are very sanctuaries of the Church, and the treasure-houses of the heart. Thousands and tens of thousands have run to it in their hours of desperation, and not one of that army of mourners but has set to his seal that it is true—true as He who said it is true, eternal, essential, unshaded truth.

And it is just what every man wants—a guarantee, an immunity from despair. To-day, it may be to you just words you hear, to-morrow, the only substance in the whole world which you can grasp, without which you would not wish to live on, no, not for an hour—a voice that never slumbers in the bosom, a word that lives with you—"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Accustom yourself to deal with the undertakings of Christ. Be familiar with the casting of the soul upon the promises. You will need it presently. It is a holy art and a blessed habit, but it wants practice.

It is probably familiar to you that the word "com-

fortless" means "bereft." We have adopted the Greek word itself into our own language, and have gradually limited it to one kind of bereavement—almost the severest kind—the bereavement of orphanhood—"I will not leave you orphans." Our translators have placed the word "orphans" in the margin—an excellent habit when a passage is one that carries two significations, and one which it appears to me our translators now would do well to copy, as sufficiently meeting the present demand for a new translation of the Bible, and yet obviating the many evils of another version of the text.

Our expression "comfortless" conveys the exact spirit of the sentence. "Orphans" or "bereft" expresses a fact—"comfortless," the feeling which a fact produces. A fact is irreversible—God Himself does not alter that. It is the feeling which results from the fact which He removes, and which, therefore, it rests with us to suffer or to escape. And so the word is practically the most accurate and the best which could have been adopted—"I will not leave you comfortless."

The promise, then, starting from bereavement, and specially from one kind of bereavement, enlarges itself to a wider range, and takes in all the stricken, and all the sad, whoever from any cause wants comfort in this sad world—"I will not leave you comfortless."

And then follows distinctly the mode in which the promise will fulfil itself, the secret of the deliverance—"I will come to you."

And here at once you will do well to observe that God does not say that you shall never be comfortless, but on the contrary, He implies that you shall be so; if he says, "I will not *leave* you comfortless,"—it is literally, "I will not send you away comfortless, I will

not let you alone comfortless." From which we infer that we may be and that we shall be comfortless for awhile, but it need not and it shall not last; for Christ will see it, and when He sees it, He will not be able to bear to see it in His child, "I will not leave you comfortless."

And this is just true to fact—nobody, however saintly, could say he was never comfortless, but he can say, "I was not left comfortless." And the length of the period of the comfortless stage depends upon the faith we have in that coming to us of Christ, of which He says, "I will come to you." Where, again, there is an exceeding beauty and power in the original; for it is a present tense, a continued present—"I am coming, I will not leave you comfortless, I am coming,"—words expressive of such constant readiness and such activity of love—"I am always coming, I am coming to you."

However, we shall be closest to the letter of our text if we now confine our view to one kind of sorrow—sorrow that has in it change, separation, loneliness, fear—the four great elements, as it seems to me, of the grief of all the bereaved—change, separation, loneliness, fear.

Retrace, a moment, a passage of the past. One you loved, and with whom you were almost in hourly converse, has passed away; and we all know how strange, how rapid, how complete the difference which comes over the scene. The colour of life is gone; everything is changed; nothing looks to us as it used to look in the sunshine, which seems to us now as if it never would come back again. It is perfectly wonderful how one face gone, one voice silent, alters the whole world.

And then a gulf rolls in, which, however persons may talk about it, is then very wide—the realizations of the other world to us then appear so dreamy and

so indefinite—they take no shape. The departed ones may speak, but you cannot hear them; they may smile, but you cannot see them; neither can you say to them words which you could have said to them before they went; the grave is a thick wall of adamant to you,—they may be conscious of no distance, but to you, O, how very far off!

No wonder that the silence is oppressive and the loneliness intolerable. No matter how many you may have around you, or how kind, you are thrown back into your own thoughts, and those thoughts circle about one, and that one is gone, and it is a solitude, a perfect solitude.

And then comes another bitterness—for I place fear always among the ingredients of sorrow—I mean a painful apprehension of what the future is going to be —for what would any present be without its future? "How shall I live on? What shall I do without that love, that counsel, that sympathy. The morning will break, and the evening will set, and another morning will break, and another evening will go out, and day will creep after day, and night after night, but that one will never come back again. And then I shall die, and perhaps, perhaps, we shall be parted for ever and for ever."

To meet these four wretchednesses, change, separation, loneliness, fear, Christ says that He Himself is the one only antidote, "I will come to you." And mark, it is His presence, not His work, not His cross, not His death, not His intercession, not His final Advent, but His presence, His real, actual, living presence now. We do not think enough of that presence. Yet all the rest, all He ever did and suffered, goes to make that presence, and that presence is strength, and peace, and union, and hope, and joy, life's life. For see, Christ

comes; with Him there is no shadow of a turning. It is the same voice which faith hears now, and the same face which faith sees now, which you heard and saw in days and years long gone by. He has not gone, and He will not, and He cannot go. "I will never leave you." And the awful change which has passed over everything else only makes it stand out more comfortingly—His impossibility of change.

And with that felt, present, unchangeable Christ, both worlds are one. The Church in heaven and the Church on earth are the members, and all meet in that one Head, and in Him they are here, in Him they are at my side, in Him that heart beats still with my heart, distance is not, the universe concentrates itself in Him, and His presence is all presence. Where then is loneliness? He is a Brother by me, to whom I can tell everything, and He will answer me; and when I speak to Him, I seem speaking to them; and to converse with Him is the closer, because they are holding the very same converse within the veil; and the solitude and the wilderness of the soul, where He is, becomes peopled with the whole host of heaven. There is no sense of being alone when we are alone, and realize that we are alone, with Jesus. And so the fear flies away. For what Christ is now, He will be always; to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, He will be here; it is all undertaken for, it is all quite safe. And that presence is the pledge of a re-union with them that are gone; a little while, and it will be He, and they, and I, and we shall be together for ever and for ever.

And so Christ redeems His pledge, and His coming, His simple coming is the cure of all—"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Read a particular emphasis on the "I," that great

word which God is so fond of, "I." The world, whatever it be to you now, this gay world, when the realities of life come, as come soon they will, that world will leave you utterly "comfortless." Those whom today you are most fondly cherishing, and of whose death you dare not speak to your dearest friend, nor admit the thought to your own heart,—if you have none but them, and no Christ in them, you will wake up some morning to such a cold vacancy, such a dreary world, for that one will have gone, and will have left you "comfortless." And the best friend you know upon earth, cannot avail to soothe those agonies of heart, for it costs more to comfort a soul, and they must let that alone for ever. They will come with their emptinesses, and they will go away, and you will be as comfortless as when they came. Only He who could say, "I will come to you" as none other comes, as He came to Martha and Mary at Bethany, as He came to Peter that night, as He came to Paul in the shipwreck, only He can say, "I will not leave you comfortless."

And read another emphasis on that "you"—"I will not leave you comfortless." "I," Jesus seems to say, "I was left comfortless, all men left me, my Father forsook me, and I know too well what it is to be left comfortless, to let any one I love go through the same;" "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Of all the bereaved in the whole world, there is none so bereft as that man, whoever he may be, of whatever happy circle he may at this moment be the centre, who cannot look up to the great God in the heavens, and say, "My Father." That man is an orphan indeed. What if there be such a one in this church this morning—a man whose soul is fatherless! Who knows but that in His present mind and His infinite sympathy, Jesus is saying now, over that poor, unhappy one,

—unhappy, just in proportion as he does not feel his unhappiness—"I will not leave you an orphan: I will come to you."

Better than this, but still most pitiable, there is another. He has known what it is to feel God His Father, but it is gone, quite gone. He has lost his heavenly Father, and he feels an orphan. Do you say, "It is I?" Then I am sure that at this moment Jesus is saying it to you, and He means my sermon to be the vehicle to carry the message to your heart—"I will not leave you an orphan, I will come to you." For if there be a thing on the whole earth which Jesus will not have—it is an orphaned heart.

The path that we have been pursuing leads us straight up to a charity which I wish to present to you to-day with all the earnestness I can. I am not sure that it is known to you all that there is in connection with this church, and attendant upon its services, a Home for Orphan Boys. It was founded about eight years ago, chiefly by the kindness of a lady who has just gone to her rest, and for whom we prayed in this church during her last illness three weeks ago. There are now nineteen boys in the orphanage, and several always waiting for admission. The matron, who has had charge of the orphanage from its commencement, and who has conducted it with great kindness, and faithfulness, and success, is just leaving, and the change of matrons in itself involves considerable expense.

But this is not the ground of my present appeal — it is a much wider one. The whole institution is very inadequately supported. It is evidently capable of great extension and very large influence, but it is cramped and stunted on every hand by want of funds. The premises we occupy in Cobden-road are miserably and wrongly insufficient. They do not

supply even what the absolute necessities of the school require, nor do they admit of any increase to its inmates. We ought at once to take a much larger house with a playground, where we should have great additional provision for the health and the comfort and the education of the children.

I am bold, therefore, to ask you, as a congregation, to turn your thoughts, your interest, and your aid, into this very important channel. I am quite sure that, if only you will enable us, we can make this Orphanage a great service to the church. Why should the Asylum for Orphan Girls at the other end of the town be so well supported and this so meagrely? Are not orphan boys, at an early age, in even a more necessitous condition than orphan girls? Therefore, I ask you to give as largely as you can to the collection to-day.

But I ask you much more—I ask you to become an annual subscriber to it,—I ask you altogether to throw yourselves more into this work of our church, and to make it worthy of its great and highest design. I ask you to empower us to lay the foundation of a good building fund. Any information which you may wish to have will be gratefully furnished by the matron of the Home, or by myself; and any subscriptions may be paid at the Home, or at the Union Bank, or to me. The very name of "orphan" is one to which every heart should leap. Jesus Himself loved it, and I like to believe that by acts of kindness to these parentless ones, by training and instructing them, by fitting them for honourable life, by leading them to Jesus, and educating them for heaven, we are actually accomplishing His own mission, and giving a literal effect to His own words, spoken to these poor boys, "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you."

# "Called to be Saints:"

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, October 30th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"Called to be Saints."—ROMANS i. 7.

IN anticipation of All Saints' Day, when unhappily there will be no sermon, I wish this morning to lead your minds to a few thoughts about the saints of God.

I have no doubt that our translation is right—"called to be saints," though as the words "to be" are not in the text, it might have been rendered, "called saints." I mention this only because it meets a mistake which might easily arise in your mind. For you might think that it means—"called to be saints" hereafter, that is, in another world, as though it would be impossible to be a saint here. But God is graciously pleased to call those who are in process of sanctification—though their sanctification be very far from complete—"saints." As in the epistles given to

the saints—"to the saints at Ephesus," "to the saints in Christ Jesus at Phillipi," "to all the saints and faithful brethren which are in Christ at Colosse." And St. Paul makes it the argument for purity to the Ephesians that they were saints—that they should so speak and so act "as becometh saints."

From which, and many other passages, it is quite clear that it is not only those perfected and beautified ones who are before the throne, who have attained the saintly condition, but all everywhere, who, being the temples of God, are dedicated to His service, and reflect something of His image.

So we arrive at once at what is the communion of saints. It is that partnership and fellowship of privilege, sympathy and love, visible or invisible, silent or expressed, which unites together "the whole family of God in earth and heaven"—though they be divided upon earth, and though they be separated for a little while by death. It is the necessary result of union with Christ. For all who are His, everywhere, both here and there, being united to Him, who is their life, they are all members of one body, drawing from one Head, and consequently are knit together in one affection, declaring it when they can, but whether they can utter it or not, equally believing in it, feeling it, comforted by it, delighting in it, in all places, and at all times. That is the communion of saints.

And you are called—"called to be saints." And if any one asks, "When was I called," I answer—First, by the election of God, and by the providence of your birth in a Christian land. Secondly, still more, by the dedication and the grace of your baptism. Thirdly, and more intimately, by those inward calls which from time to time you have felt in your heart.

And fourthly, by the many voices of affliction, and by the constant gentle operations of the Comforter in your soul.

For understand—there is a saintship which lies in the eternal appointment of God, which is the root and beginning of all. There is a saintship in the having been deliberately and designedly set apart by others as a holy vessel, which is independent of your own will. There is a saintship in your own voluntary surrender of yourself at different times to God, which is the responsible saintship. There is a saintship in the secret leadings, and teachings, and mouldings of the Holy Spirit, which is real and actual saintship. There is a saintship which lies in a holy, self-denying life, the copy of Jesus, which is apparent and active saintship. And there is a saintship in perfection of being still beyond you, not reached nor yet conceived, —that satisfying likeness in which one day you shall awake, capable of God's presence—your whole body, soul, and spirit concentrated to one object, in one harmonious serving, and that is the saintship of hope, the design of your redemption, the end of your creation.

But now, what is the process ? How are you to become a saint ? Let me try to sketch the progress in a very faint outline.

First stands the pardon of sin,—and not only the pardon, but the sense of the pardon of sin,—without which you can never proceed to real saintliness. You must be washed in the fountain, you must have had the testimony of the Holy Ghost within you, that in the blood of Jesus Christ you are clean. The past must be obliterated before you can go on to the future of saintliness. And I lay the more stress upon this

because I am perfectly persuaded that many greatly increase the difficulty of saintliness by inverting the order, and putting holiness before peace.

But forgiveness is not merit; it is not even acceptance. You must be acceptable and pleasing in God's sight. And for this end, you must have more than pardon—you must have a righteousness not your own—you must be covered in it, and you must be able to present yourself at any moment to God in Christ, and be pleasing even in His holy eye, because He sees not you, but the Christ in whom you are.

When you are so pardoned and so justified—and almost identical with these two things—an act of union takes place between Christ and your soul. You are wedded to Him, you are mystically one with Him. It is not only that you have received Him into your heart, but really, truly, and literally, you are joined to Him. Through that union and grafting, immediately the Holy Ghost flows into you—that Holy Ghost which is the giver and the fountain of all saintliness. The flow will vary according as the Spirit is grieved or honoured in you—but He breathes in you,—He prompts thoughts,—He inspires affection,—He elevates desires,—He spiritualizes tastes,—He informs the intellect,—He controls the nature,—He metamorphoses the man.

And now saintliness, properly so called, begins. You are,—you know that you are, you feel that you are, you rejoice that you are—a thing dedicate. By express acts, you have dedicated yourself; and now the saintly life goes on. There is a deep and secret intercourse set up between your soul and God. You feed on spiritual food,—your closet is a sanctuary,—your prayers have an intensity;—it is always going on, it is like the

fabled music of the spheres, a thread of sweetness so constant that you almost cease to be conscious of it. Your Bible is a home,—worship is the atmosphere of your love, especially the Holy Communion—it is your delight. There is a spiritual presence there to you, without which you could not go on, and which every time sends you strengthened upon your way.

Meanwhile, the natural appetites are being subdued and the body subjugated. The besetting sin, by the power of a wonderful alchemy, is being gradually turned into a characteristic grace. The temper which was hot is meek—the spirit which was restless is patient—your appetites first changed, then turned, go upward. There is an inner life always going on, like a choice garden, always tended, always guarded, always watered. And that little inner life begins more and more to rule the outer one, till everything shows it—the bearing grows calm, lowly, lofty. There is a stamp of Jesus, the features of the man of sorrows, which cannot be mistaken. You are always catching rays from the unseen world—there is a silent eloquence for God in your very look.

And necessarily,—not so much by effort and constraint, as by a law of your new being,—you have become devoted to good works. You love the brethren, —whatever is holy, it is akin to you—you are irresistibly drawn to it—you speak one to another of things that belong to your peace—it is not everywhere religion, but it is all religious—you do not always talk of what is sacred, but there is a savour of piety which makes itself felt everywhere. You are found in every company in the lowest seat; and increasingly self is not. You live for others. To do the meanest act of love is the highest privilege and the sweetest luxury.

You yearn for souls. To extend the Church is your daily mission, and not a day must pass without some work for Christ. You do not covet shame; but when shame comes, you are above it. Your cross is not dragged; but borne cheerfully. Your whole heart is too much set upon one thing to be much distracted by the circumstances and the accidents of outer life. You do not give up the world, for in the higher tastes and pleasures which you gain, and at that high level at which you are walking, the world has ceased to be a thing which you have to give up. You can be in it, and yet not of it. You almost smile now at the difficulty which some people have, and which you yourself felt once, about the amusements of the world. It is the poor, and the sick, and the afflicted, and the ignorant, where your name is best known, and where your footsteps are oftenest found. To do good is life, for you are realizing a citizenship in heaven,—you feel the society of angels,—you are living in the family of God,—you are meetening for the higher companies round God's throne. And yours is a hidden life,—your reward is coming,—your Master is near! O how precious! And all things which concern Him are the great realities, and there is nothing worth much which has not in it truthfulness, and Christ, and eternity, and glory.

And now men are beginning to "take knowledge of you," and they see that you are ripening fast. It is plain that you are soon going to something more congenial to you than this lower world. You are so humble, so kind, so quiet, so happy, so pure, so like Christ—oh! it will be a very little step up. And yet, at the moment when you are the nearest, you are feeling the farthest—none will owe so much to Christ as

you—you, the chief of sinners. And the highest title that you ever will accept is, "less than the least of all saints."

I do not venture now to lift the veil, and look where those blessed ones, in the dazzling lustre of their white robes, are still pursuing their saintly offices. But I do ask at once—"Who are these?" Out of what material is that holy saintship made? And He who makes the rainbow from the mist, and the pearl from the shell, and the butterfly from the grub, and the diamond from the charcoal—He gives the answer. By pain, by discipline, by sorrow, by humiliation, by penitence, by contrition, He has done it—"these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

But "who are they?" Who are they? Hear the wondrous catalogue of hell's black list—"fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners:—such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

O the strange things of heaven! O the marvellous power of God's transforming grace!

I am persuaded that there are many to whom it is a very small attraction to be what is commonly meant by a religious person—a name which often conveys, if not narrowness and severity, yet certainly something very moderate, and almost quite negative. I quite sympathize with the feelings of men of the world, who very often say, "If I am ever a Christian, I will be a very different Christian from the Christians I see."

## 8

Do not be a religious person—be "a saint," be an eminent servant of God—determine that you will be a great Christian—that you will do something large before you die—that you will be really holy, heavenly, God-like, "a saint."

The higher the mark, the easier it is to some minds to reach it. And the reason why some simply do nothing, is because they have not yet conceived great things. Do not be content with common-places,—do not be like Christians about you. Throw your ambition into a channel worthy of the capabilities of which you are conscious. Leave beaten tracks, and conventional standards, and the trite ordinary ways of so-called Christians—be "a saint," be a saint.

Who knows what a work may be appointed for you to do in this church? Who knows to what a place you are to reach hereafter, in the ever-ascending circles of the blest?

But, oh! what is all saintliness without Christ? Let the retrospect of the holiest speak—let the memory of the failures and the sins of the best life say—what is all saintliness without the sanctities of Jesus? With Him we began when we first crept for mercy, and with Him we must end when we would soar into the heavens. No holiness but what His blood has washed —no saintship but the spotless robe of His immaculate perfection—the last touches must be His. And I thank God every day more and more for those precious words, too little understood, "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

# Appointed Times:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, November 6th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"And the thing was true, but the time appointed was long."—DANIEL x. 1.

THOSE who have known the trial and the temptation of a long waiting-time, will appreciate the practical character and the importance of these words, which I have, on that account, chosen for our consideration this morning. For there are very few things harder to bear, or more often handles of Satan, than those strangely-protracted intervals which so frequently come in between prayers and their answers,—between promises and their fulfilments,—between good desires and their attainments,—between the best-laid schemes and their reasonable success.

And then it grows a very easy thing to draw a wrong inference both ways, and to argue with ourselves—either that because the thing is true, the time ought to have been short; or because the time is long, the thing must have been false.

In other words, how many there are who think, in the weariness of a long expectation, "If I had only

prayed better, surely I should have been heard sooner;" or, "If I had had more faith, I should not have been so often disappointed;" or, "If I had laid my foundation deeper, God would never have so retarded the superstructure." Of all which, and much more that is like it, the true solution lies within the little sentence, "The thing was true, but the time appointed was long."

The truth, then, which I wish to press is this—that the space which intervenes in all these cases, and which seems to us so needless and so severe, is as much settled and predetermined by God as the prayer we offer, or the means we use, or the event itself for which we are looking. The two are parts of the same thing; both are ordained, both are covenanted. The time is an appointed time,—not loose—definite; and the one is as certain as the other,—"The thing is true, but the time appointed is long."

Why the result is so slow in coming when we have done, and are conscious that we have done, the right thing to get it, and when the expected end is certified to us by the word of God—why we are so long kept before we get the answer to prayer—the reasons of these things are some of them already opened—some are opening to us, as we grow older, every day more and more, and we grasp a little of the whole or any one of God's dealings with us—and some are in clouds, and awaiting the revelation of the day.

But to help us to realize the fact, and to catch glimpses of reasons, let us look for a moment or two at one or another of God's long-appointed times, as we have them in the history of the past.

This world was made to be a pure, and a happy, and a beautiful world. And we know that it will be yet—sinless, lovely, and all joyous—"The thing is true." And yet nearly six thousand years have rolled away, and with the exception of a very short interval at the first, it has been and is a miserable world. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which

have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves."

May I reverently ask, Why? Is there a cause? Evidently, as it seems to me, evidently it is all arranged to let this world be a field, a platform, for the exhibition of the Son of God—His incarnation, His work, His character, His humiliation, His glory. God designed to show here to us, and to the universe, His mind, and His way of making happy—a happiness far beyond Paradise—a happiness greater than a mere created happiness could ever have been. Therefore, our world fell, therefore it is bad and wretched, and therefore it will be renewed, and be better than at the beginning. The time is not a day too long for that work—the tools are, as it were, commensurate in their greatness—"The thing is true, but the time appointed is long."

A hundred and twenty years elapsed between the prediction of the flood and the execution of the sentence. Evidently the 120 years were of mercy—the same motive which may explain very many of God's delays—the same which St. Peter, drawing a parallel between the flood of water and the flood of fire, alleges, why the end of the world is deferred—"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But when the 120 years were past, the flood was a "true thing," though to Noah's faith and the world's unbelief, "the time appointed" must have been very "long."

It was more than 400 years after God covenanted to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his children, that his seed actually took possession of it—and things very unlike such an issue, and making it very improbable, took place in the interval. At this very moment, it is about four thousand years since Abraham, and yet all the promises which were made to him and his generations, are not even yet come to pass. But already we see sufficient reason for both.

Partly, "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full," —partly, the children of Israel had not been educated to be fit to enter into the Promised Land before, and therefore the promise of Palestine was reserved so long. And now, as respects the fulness of the number and the glory of the stock of Abraham, it is plain that it has been kept back to let in the Gentiles—which is being now accomplished—the Gentiles to swell the number of the seed, and to share the glory. And when the number of the elect shall be accomplished, then shall the end be. Meanwhile, all along, "the thing was true, but the time appointed was long."

Or look at the same thing on a smaller scale, and more after our own measure. Abraham was kept a long time waiting for the predicted child—and when it came, it was the dearer; and the allegory, the all-important allegory, was established, that the seed of the promise is never according to nature.

Jacob's "few days" were a term of twenty years. It was just the discipline and the retributive justice which such a character as his needed, before he could be restored to home and concord.

Hannah's child came at last, but not till the mother was prepared to dedicate him at once to the Lord.

It was not till a long period after he was anointed, that David was crowned; but all the persecutions of Saul, which filled the interval, were making him the truer Psalmist and the better king.

Hezekiah did not live to see the conversion of his wicked son; but nevertheless, after his father's death, Manasseh's heart was turned, "and he knew that the Lord He was God."

Christ and St. Stephen both prayed for their murderers. We have great reason to think that in the former instance—we are quite certain that in the latter—the prayer was answered; but in neither instance was the answer immediate.

It is true that in some cases, God has been pleased to make the time which lies between very short, even

none at all, as with Daniel, who bears testimony, "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." And the prayers which preceded miracles, and the miracles themselves, were almost always of instantaneous effect. But then all these were miraculous and exceptional, and the very way in which the thing is related shows that they were exceptional. As also in that promise so often quoted, "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Where again it is plainly set forth as an unwonted thing, a marvellous mercy, a great wonder.

Perhaps it is natural, perhaps not very wrong, that every one, in the urgency of his own desire, and in the felt importance of his own case, should think, "I am going to be an exception." And so he may be, but the general law of God stands, "Wait; abide patiently for Him." "The vision is for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

The fact is, that God has expressly covenanted what He will give us; but for the rest He has left no warrant, —He has made no covenant when, where, how. In this matter, you must be prepared to say, "My times are in thine hand," and to believe that the period of the holding back is as much a part of the promise as the issue itself, and that they both move under one grand law—"The thing was true, but the time appointed was long."

That you may the better accept God's will in this matter, let me name one or two of the reasons, as we may suppose and believe, of God's mysterious, painful dealing about intervals.

First, God will always be a sovereign, not to be questioned, independent of man's opinions, infinitely beyond man's judgment, and always crossing the hands of man's expectations. There are thousands of

things that are, which are simply that you may ask to-day, and that you may ask to-morrow, and the next day, Why, why is this ?—and that you may never have an answer.

Secondly, in heaven there is no time, and where there is no limit of space, there can never be boundary of time; and where there is no boundary of time, there can never be limit of space. It is impossible for us to conceive, much less to pronounce on, the action of one to whom all time is one perpetual now. In God's mind, there is never any intermediate period. The prayer, the time after the prayer, the answer, when it comes, are all one—He sees them perfectly identified. How can we estimate the operations of such a Being ? We can only lay our hands upon our mouths, and adoringly wait. This is St. Peter's own reasoning about the apparent deferring of the second Advent—"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Nothing is long to God; and we may almost say that as we gain more of the mind of God, nothing is long to us.

Thirdly, it is a rule of God's government, which you will find pervading every part of it, that everything is made matter of faith before it is made matter of enjoyment. And the more the faith has been exercised, the greater the enjoyment when it arrives. Just as light seems to be gathering itself in the darkness—so a blessing swells all the time it is being held back. It comes late, but it comes with interest.

And, fourthly, the discipline is very good and necessary, for it addresses itself to two of our weakest points—our impatience and our pride—our impatience, that we always want to have everything in a minute, —and our pride, that each one thinks he is to be preferred before another, and that we can judge better than God. But the man who wishes to have answers to prayer, he must be a man who recognises that God is very kind, and that he is very little—he must be a

child content to tarry his Father's leisure—and the sooner, perhaps, that lesson is learnt, the sooner will the Father give His child what He has been keeping from him just till he can say it.

I see one of you laying plans again and again. You lay your plans in prayer, and, as you believe, in the promises. You doubt not that what you propose is for usefulness and for the glory of God; and yet, hitherto you have no success. Rather, everything grows more adverse; and every day the achievement seems a greater and a greater impossibility, and you have almost tired hope, till hope will hope no more.

There is another of you. You are earnestly praying down your besetting sin, but still that sin is rampant. Or, it is some difficulty in the way, and the difficulty grows continually more gigantic. Or, some dear, holy object has been in your heart, and it has been for years, and it is no nearer—is not it farther off than ever? You ask for victory, and behold a defeat; peace, and all is unquiet.

A third is urgent in intercession for a soul—a child's soul, a parent's soul, a husband's soul, a wife's soul, a friend's soul, but there is no token. That soul is as hard and as far off from God this day as when you offered those first prayers for that soul, which now lie far back on the very horizon of your memory.

Another has been expecting long, with outstretched neck, the Lord's return, expecting it almost every morning; but He has not come, He does not come. "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the world."

The question has met me of late very often in my ministry,—"Where are all my prayers? What is become of my prayers?" I will tell you where they are—in God's registry—not a syllable erased—they speak, and they are prevalent—there is an answer, and the answer is as the Syro-Phœnician woman's—grace to go on, grace to go on and wrestle. The result is being moulded; it takes time to mould it—it is being

moulded within the veil—it is—presently it will appear. God has not been careless about you, He has not forgotten you, the moment of the grand satisfaction is dated; but it may be some time yet. "The thing is true, but the time appointed was long."

What you have to do is to get a very firm grasp upon the first clause—"The thing is true"—to take grand, worthy views of what God's word is. No mountain rests upon its base so firm—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." It is an anchor cast within the veil, sure and steadfast, and held by two immutable cables—God's nature and God's covenant. Learn what it is to throw yourself absolutely upon a promise. Feel, if eternity were to roll between, it is a promise, it is His promise, I will believe it, it cannot lie, God never mocks.

There is a state of mind so loving, so filial, that were the "appointed time" an hundred-fold what it is, it would not be "long."

If I should draw a picture of a Christian, it should be this:—It should be night, and he should stand upon his high places in the dark, and he should be looking out for the breaking of the morning; but because "the time appointed" is very "long," he should have a strong staff given him, and in the tiptoe of his expectation he should be leaning heavily upon his staff, and that staff the eternal truth of a faithful God. "The thing is true," and to that man staying himself upon that staff, it would not matter if the "appointed time" was life-long.

# Passed from Death unto Life:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, November 13th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."—JOHN v. 24.

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THERE are two things here which at once stand out to the mind with equal prominence—the smallness of the conditions, and the magnificence of the offer. The salvation of a man's soul is simply a matter of capitulation. All that God requires of His creatures, who have become by sin, first rebellious, and then hostile, is surrender—absolute, unqualified surrender. For this purpose, He has made a proposal. The proposition originated in His own mind, and He sent His Son on

the embassage. We, we are not ambassadors; Christ is the Ambassador; the ministers are the deputies—"Now, then, we are ambassadors for"—in the place of, representing—"Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead"—we, in Christ's stead, pray you—"be ye reconciled to God."

The terms of this capitulation are simply two—Hear the messenger, and believe the mission. The proffered result is instant security of life—that life infinitely prolonged, and no punishment. So we arrive at the force of Christ's present words. He addresses a defenceless enemy just on the eve of being crushed, righteously crushed. He speaks in virtue of His plenipotentiary powers which have been committed to Him by the Father—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me"—that is, accepts my word and my mission,—at that act of trust and humiliation, he now has, he "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life"—life immediate, life perpetual, life indemnified.

We will look first at the undertaking which the Almighty has made, of what He will do to every guilty child of His who gives himself up at discretion.

But to understand and appreciate it, I must ask you first to look a moment at our position. We have provoked God, I may say we have attacked God in His just rights and attributes, and therefore we have separated ourselves from God, and a gulf has rolled in between. Therefore we are dead—I do not say we deserve to die—I do not say we are on the eve to die—I do not say that we are sure to die—I say we are

dead. What is death? Not annihilation—that is a mere word—no man ever did or could conceive annihilation. What is death? Separation. In one form or another, you will find all death consists of the idea of separation—the separation of the body from the soul—the separation of a man from his work, and his pleasures, and his friends, and the bright fields of a sunny world in which he has been living—the separation of the soul from God—the separation of body and soul from God for ever—separation. Separation is death. So that the very alienation from God, in which sin has already placed us, is death.

Persons put away from them the thought of eternal punishment as being too abhorrent to their idea of the character of God. But suppose that eternal punishment, or eternal death, means eternal separation—that is, a man refusing nearness, which is life, is to go on and on in his present distance, which is death. Is there anything inconsistent with God's general dealings, or unlike His character in that? Is that in any way inequitable? And yet, can we not conceive how that, with nothing else, that would be hell enough? To that state, then, the necessary consequences of a life separate from God, Christ comes, and He offers union with Himself, that is, nearness to God, that is life—life in His whole being—physical life of a higher order, because it comes consecrated—intellectual life, such as he would never have attained without it—a life of latent energies and affections, which, but for that, would sleep on for ever—life of true, satisfying service—spiritual life—sanctified life—life in senses which we yet do not know—all life.

Of this life which Christ offers to every man who will give himself up, I want you now to mark three things. First, it is a present possession—it is a fact. The moment that you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you live, and there is no more death. You have, by that new birth, undergone a resurrection —not that first resurrection spoken of in the Revelation—prior to that—but by that resurrection, you have done with death for ever. Even as Christ could not die again, neither can you. What is coming, and is called death, will be no death to you, for this reason, there will be no separation, none. I doubt whether a departed child of God feels any separation from those he has left upon earth. Certainly, there is no separation from God. Therefore the elements of death are taken away, you will never die. You did die with Christ upon the cross, as a member of His mystical body—now, you as essentially live with Christ; therefore, there is no more death for ever and for ever. It is an historical fact—you "have passed," you have "passed from death unto life."

Secondly, this life lasts. In that life which you have had to do with, and which you used to live before you became a Christian, there was nothing very lasting—either the thing itself passed away, or the zest of it went, or your power to enjoy it, ceased. In this life, nothing perishes, because it draws out of the infinite, —it is a life with hidden springs in God—and therefore there is eternity in it all. It is not that you are living a life now which will be rewarded by the exchange for everlasting life by-and-by; but it is the same life now as it will be then. That eternal life the

other side the grave is begun; heaven is within you; and that life will go on and on, only growing better and better, happier and happier, brighter and brighter, for ever and ever.

And thirdly, there is nothing now behind—there is no condemnation to you—there is nothing hanging over your head—no future to be afraid of, for your sins have already been condemned and punished in Christ. I am speaking of a thing which only the Holy Ghost can teach you—"He shall reprove the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." It does not mean that the righteous will not appear before the bar of God at the day of judgment—but they will, long before, have been assured of their pardon, their acceptance, their safety; their joy. There will be none of the terrors of judgment—rather, it will be a public vindication of God's justice, a declaration of their condition of happiness. Sins, indeed, which we may yet have committed after we have an interest in Christ, will have to be confessed, repented of, and very likely punished, and to be washed in the fountain. But being in Him, and continuing in Him, there will be no processes of prosecution, there will be no terror. The old sins lie buried, there is no resurrection for forgiven sins,—they will never appear again,—they shall not come into judgment.

And now, what are the terms upon which these grand operations—life instant, life eternal, life safe, are made? They are very short, and to those who are in earnest quite easy.

The first is—"Hear my word." Do not you all hear it? Not with the inward ear. But what word

do you hear with the outward ear? Is it indeed what Christ calls "my word?" Is He the speaker? At this moment, are you listening to Jesus? Or is it a man's words, the expressions of a man? Is it that, or is it Christ? O that there were no man. If it were just only Christ Himself, with His own gentle voice speaking to your heart, why I do not think a single soul would leave this church this morning untouched or unsaved.

But do you ask what "word" Christ means when He says, "Hear my word?" I do not think it much matters which. If you really receive any one word of the Lord Jesus Christ as His, you will receive it all. But if you like, take one. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now, if you will only listen to that in your innermost being, as the loving word of a dear, present, personal Saviour at your side, speaking individually to you, you will not be far from being saved.

But there is another condition of peace—"Believe in Him that sent me." I wish you particularly to observe that Christ does not say, "Believe in me," but "Believe in Him that sent me." And I ask you the more to do this for this reason. Some take objection at the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, on the ground that it does not put the Father in His right place. They even go so far as to say that it makes Him a cruel God. To whom cruel? To whom? Not to us, for being, as we certainly are, sinners, what could He have done kinder than to provide Himself a way by which, compatibly with His perfect justice, and without interfering with the government of His universal

empire, He could receive back again to His bosom, and love and bless, all His creatures, even the guiltiest. But cruel to Christ? Certainly it is not cruel to Christ, for Christ Himself—I quote His own word—Christ Himself delighted to suffer. He leapt to it, and He is Himself the happier for ever and ever. Where, then, is the cruelty? Therefore Christ here, and in many other places, is careful to trace it all to the Father, to the love of the Father—"Believe in Him that sent me."

It is a great part of your salvation to take worthy views of the Father. There are two pillars to your peace—what the Father is, and what the Son has done. What, therefore, you have to believe is this—that Christ's visit to this earth was a mission—a mission with a definite object, and that that object was life,—that it is a mission to you—that the Father sent Him—that therefore the mission is effectual, and the Father is love. If by the power of the Holy Ghost, you believe that, your soul is safe, and your life is begun, and that life is a covenanted life for time and for eternity.

# Wishing to See Jesus:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, November 20th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"Sir, we would see Jesus."—JOHN xii. 21.

THE Greeks, originally sheer idolaters, who spoke these words to Philip, were themselves illustrations of the rule, that those who live up to the light they have, will be gradually led on to more. They were among those that came up to worship at the feast—Jesus's last Passover—so that they were either proselytes altogether, or at least, were companions of those who feared God—that is, they had, either wholly or partly, given up heathenism. And this step was, according to God's moral government, rewarded by another. A desire came into their hearts—awakened no doubt by the stupendous miracle of which all

Jerusalem was full that day, the rising of Lazarus—to become acquainted with Christ.

That they did see Him after Philip and Andrew had mentioned to Christ their desire, though we have no account of the interview, there can be no reasonable doubt; and very little indeed as to what was the issue of the conversation. It was in this manner, as we have every reason to believe, these men were converted—a conscientious step, a good desire, a contact with Christ, truth.

It has often been made matter of difference of opinion how persons become Christians. Is there first a giving up of what is wrong and false, and then an intermediate stage, in which a person feels nothing and is nothing, and then does truth, taking occasion by the vacuum, enter the mind? Is this the way? Or, does truth, in the first instance, come and drive out the error, so that there is no middle state, no time in man's moral history when the heart is a blank, a territory abandoned by the evil, and not yet occupied by the good? Which is the way? I believe the real answer is—"As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But in by far the majority of cases of conversion, I am persuaded that there is no empty place, but that truth, coming in and taking possession, expels falsehood—just as there can be no parenthesis between light and darkness, but the moment that it ceases to be dark, it is light, and the moment the light has begun, the darkness is over.

It would be impossible to unroll all the histories

which lie folded up in these words—"We would see," or rather, "We wish to see, Jesus." You will remember that it was the language of the whole of the Old Testament dispensation. The cherubim bending over the mercy-seat, as if to look into the mysteries of the ark, were the emblems of all the Mosaic ages. The expected Messiah, the desire of all nations, was the point to which all faces turned; and Christ was describing multitudes of every generation when He said, "Verily, I say unto you, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And as the appointed time for the birth of Christ drew on, the desire intensified itself. Simeon, and Anna, and the Magi, and the Greeks, were but representatives of the whole Jewish and Gentile world. There was a universal looking for some great one who was then to appear upon the earth. And during His life, the crowds that thronged His steps bore testimony to the feeling, and Zaccheus was probably not the only man who, in his pious curiosity, thought difficulties well repaid by one sight of Christ.

At this moment, it is the outstretched longing of the mind of the whole Hebrew nation—mistaken, indeed, in other things, but in perfect sympathy with us, and right in this simple fact—that they wait, literally with open door in their synagogue worship, they wait with open door to see Christ. And the whole Church has its eye towards the Advent, and as the hour really approaches, we have reason to know that the expectation, at least of the Church, will be at

its height. The agitations and the conflicts of war, which will be then upon the earth, the dissensions of the Church, the anarchy of nations, the unsettlement of old institutions, all will harbinger the great event, and give wings to anticipation, till the sentiment of all mankind could not be better expressed of those better times that are coming, than in the simple aspiration, "We would see Jesus." When will the restorer of all things come? when will Christ be here? "We would see Jesus."

Meanwhile, in a narrower circle, what are the utterances of the feelings of every heart, just waking up to a sense of sin, and groping its way among fear and embarrassment into the light? "I would see Jesus."

What would describe the condition of hundreds of Christians who have lost the glimpses which once they enjoyed, who are now passing under clouds, realizing the prophetic meaning of the words—"A darkness, even a darkness that may be felt,"—what is it but a better opening for Him? "O for only one more clear glance of that dear face! I would see Jesus, too."

What illumines every dying Christian's passage through the valley, to that ever-nearing and nearing home? "I shall see Him whom I have so often pictured,—I shall lie at His feet,—I shall look in His face,—I shall hear Him speak,—I shall grow into His likeness,—O let me go, let me go,—I would see Jesus."

But this is not all. There are a great many more, as it seems to me, besides these, to whom these words truly belong. These can put their thoughts into words, and can say understandingly, "We would see

Jesus." But those to whom I am going to speak cannot do that. They can define nothing. Still, not a whit the less, they have feelings which, if they could really speak, would say no other. Theirs is that emptiness of heart, that sense of disappointment, that dissatisfaction with all they have and all they are, that vague consciousness that all is not right within, that incipient conviction of sin, as done against God, that germ of religious fear and godly penitence and hope which lies out somewhere, which, could it all speak and take clothing, as a Christian clothes it, it would be—"I want something beyond me, I want a Saviour; I want a friend, already my heart knows it; I require something to meet all these strange conditions of my new being. I would be—what? I do not know—God knows. I would see—what? I do not know—God knows—let God end the sentence, 'I would see Jesus.'"

I believe there are not a few of you, brethren, who at this very moment are just in that state. Your feelings are not formed, you could not give them shape. I know them—and this is the meaning of it—you want something, though you have not it—it is Christ, it is Christ. Put that to yourself, and put that to God, and say, "I would see Jesus."

But I have not only to do with Christians. I believe that there are thousands of persons all over the whole world, in the darkest lands, and under the most superstitious and degrading creeds, who are feeling after things of which they have not, at the same time, a conception. So it must have been with those Greeks, —they could have understood very little of what their

own words involved when they said, "We would see Jesus." And so now, with many among the heathen—partly, that unknown to them, God, having thoughts of mercy to them, has begun a work in their hearts,—partly, through the constitution of their own minds, and special circumstances through which they have passed—partly, through some indirect rays of truth which have accidently found their way into their mind,—they have learnt to go forth to something higher, something better, than they have felt within, or ever seen about them. Some idea they have of sin—some apprehension, though very indistinct, of a purer sacrifice, and a worthier propitiation than they can find in their own wretched, cruel rites. Surely, such breathings of immortality, such echoes of the Holy Ghost, such relics of Paradise, such strivings of God—surely they are everywhere. And their feelings after truth—inklings they are of grace and glory—the first breathings of infant life—marks of sovereignty—tokens of election—the distant notes of coming music—the almost invisible steps of the great God, entering to take possession of His own. Such was the state of Macedon, when the man said darkly, "Come over and help us." Such was the "What must I do?" at Philippi:—such was the man who was told in the heavenly vision at three o'clock to send to Joppa;—and such the Grecian suit, only a little more developed,—"Sir, we would see Jesus."

The whole truth turns upon the fact that Jesus is made for a man, and a man is made for Jesus. And till a man has Jesus, there is a grasping of the soul after something which, whether he knows it or not, is

Jesus. How Jesus does fit into the crevices of a man's heart, many of you could tell. You know well that there are affections of our very nature which are never really met till He meets them; and I believe this—that there is not a sorrow, or a want, or a fear, or a sin, however special, however peculiar, it may be, for which God has not provided the exact remedy somewhere in the work or the attributes of Jesus Christ—for He supplements our being. It is only to get a clearer and deeper insight into Christ, and it is not too much for me to say that every wish and every need of the human soul will there find its mate.

And do not you believe, brethren, that human nature is the same all over the world? At this moment, among the various Pagans, do not you believe that there are men—some with intellect beyond their generation, some with larger hearts than their fellows, some with a keener conscience, some with a greater chasm, some with more aching sorrows, some with more appalling views of sin and darkening terrors, some with brighter imaginations, some with more heavenly creations of the unseen—the real burden of whose unsatisfied breast every morning is, though they do not know it, "We would see Jesus." And in their way, and according to their degree, they have set out to see Him. Their fasts, their penances, their self-tortures—they have given much, they have prayed much, they have thought much—they have gone out to their solitudes—they have asked many questions of many minds—they have wrestled hard in their own souls—but still, conscientious, and earnest, and credulous as they are—conscientious, earnest, cre-

dulous to a degree that puts us to shame—still, the blank is not filled up, and the wretched feeling is still at their hearts' core. And empty hopes, unsatisfied minds, a heart chagrined, are crying out still in a Christian's ear, "We would see Jesus." "We would see Jesus."

It is affecting to think how many there are while I am preaching, in every country under heaven, in such a state of mind as that. And do not you recognize—that those who stand the nearest in the privilege to Christ—that country, that Church, that individual—are sent there for this very purpose to introduce to Jesus those who are feeling their way in the outer circle. What if you were appointed of God to be, amongst His disciples, an Andrew or a Philip, to bring to Jesus some poor, unhappy heathen man, whose one thought, this moment, as you know how to interpret thoughts, is,—"Oh! I crave for something, I want rest, I long for home, I would see Jesus." Brethren, do you show Christ to that man! I cannot understand how any one who ever knew Jesus could not wish to display His loveliness. I cannot tell how any one could have once seen Jesus, and not longed to make another see Him. You cannot now take your poor, dark brother by the hand, and lead him up to that meek and gentle waiting One; but you can be the hand which shall empower another hand to bring him to your Master. And it is no mean honour if you live only for this—to help to lift the veil, and to say to one whose heart's secret has long been, "I would see Jesus,"—"Behold the man!" And the more you give to-day to missions, and the more you pray, and the

more you believe, and the more you love, the more chance there is—forgive the word—the more certainty there is, that by God's grace, through you, a soul—a soul which really wants Him, and ignorantly seeks Him—shall see Him. If you do this, I have not the shadow of a doubt that the next time you have to seek Jesus, you will more quickly find Him; and when you do see Him, He will be a nearer Jesus and a lovelier Jesus than before.

## EARNESTNESS:

# The First Advent Sermon

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, November 27th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."—LUKE iii. 4, 5, 6.

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I PROPOSE, this Advent, to take for our study four chief heads of the preaching of St. John the Baptist. I do not ask you to consider generally the character, or the mission, or the work, or even the teaching of John—but simply four of the leading topics of his discourses. And in this, I cannot doubt that we shall be carrying out the purpose of the Church of Christ for this season.

For what John the Baptist was to the First Advent, the ministers of God ought to be to the Second. He was the Elijah of Malachi. Of this, there can be no

question, for Christ Himself expressly declared and said, that Elias was already come in the person of John the Baptist. But the Elijah of Malachi has not yet fulfilled his prophetic mission,—for he is to come "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord," which has not yet been; and he is to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers," which has not yet been done. Therefore either Elijah himself will still appear personally upon this earth before the end of the world, or another will come like him, or we, the messengers of God, are to be in the spirit and power of Elias, and do the work of the Carmelite.

But whichever way it be, we must conclude that the ministry of Elijah—that is, the ministry of John the Baptist, is the best Advent guide that we can take, and that we are acting according to the mind of God when we select for our consideration, at this time, four subjects of John's preaching—Earnestness, Repentance,—Duty,—Expectation,—the four together going to make the one word preparation,—that thing which God likes so well, and which, I believe, whether we recognize it or not, God always offers—preparation.

In speaking then, to-day, of earnestness, I must not forget that he who taught it in the wilderness and round about Jordan, was himself the very thing he taught. Of all the men that ever lived, John the Baptist was one great concentrated earnestness. And it would be very little good to tell another to be what you are not yourself. Pray for me that I may be earnest. For whether it be in you, or whether it be in me, it ensures almost everything else, if we are only earnest.

And also I would that in this and all my teaching, I might be to you just that which John the Baptist was to his hearers—a voice, only a voice—not a man to be praised, or a man to be blamed, but a mere vehicle, a message, a vibration of the air, a motion of spirit coming to your heart, and touching it, in silence, in loneliness, in a separation where God has isolated you, —"the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

When we speak of "the way of the Lord," it is well that you remind yourselves that there are many Advents. It was an Advent at Bethlehem,—it was an Advent at Pentecost,—it was an Advent at the destruction of Jerusalem,—there is an Advent going on now, whenever Christ comes to a man's heart, and knocks at its door;—it will be an Advent presently, when He comes to take His kingdom in His great glory,—and it will be an Advent beyond, when He comes to judge the world.

But all we have to do with now, is the Advent which immediately and personally concerns us at the present moment—the spiritual Advent of the soul, and the glorious Advent of which we know not when it will be, and which, therefore, being possible at any time, is virtually an universal present.

Our subject, then, is earnestness in receiving Christ and in waiting for Christ. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

I believe, indeed, that there is a literal physical sig-

nification in those words, which must occur to any mind. I never look on a railroad, and anticipate the almost certain progress of development of that most wonderful discovery, without asking myself—"Is this the valley filled? is this the mountain and the hill brought low? is this the crooked made straight, and the rough ways smooth?"—and is all this really a preparation for the actual and visible empire, and the marchings of Him who shall sit on His throne as King at Jerusalem, while He governs the whole earth? And in this way are men to "see the salvation of God?"

But whether it be true in any material sense, it is quite certain that it bears an allegorical and a spiritual one; and the earnestness of which I wish to speak to you, this morning, consists in a "prepared way" and "straight paths."

For this is just what it seems to me constitutes being in earnest about religion. It is to have resolved that you will go to God;—or, what is the same thing, and the better way of stating it, that God will come to you,—that you will have all the avenues of your heart quite open to God, the door heaven-ward—and that all your paths shall be straight, none obliterated, nothing concealed, nothing tortuous—no going round about for your object—nothing to deceive others, or deceive yourself,—but a single object with a direct course—a "straight path."

To this, then, let us go to work, and pursue it a little more in detail.

What is earnestness? I have laid down, then, that before there can be earnestness, there must be first a fixed conviction that God loves you—that God desires

to have you—that Christ is waiting to come into your heart—that even now He is next to you, speaking to you, striving with you, drawing you, inviting you, urging you,—and that the time is very near when you will actually see Him,—that He will soon be here—and that your eternal happiness depends upon whether you are ready to meet Him as a forgiven man, as a holy man, as a prepared man. It is to have this well laid in your mind as a fact; and then to feel about it, "There is nothing like this; there is nothing in the world to be compared to this; everything else is mere dust in the balance; this is all in all. Am I Christ's? am I safe? am I ready?"

Next, upon these facts it is to have made up your mind thoroughly, once and for all, that you will be a Christian—cost what it may, that you will be a Christian. It is to have this as the one great object of life—above all, absorbing all, ruling all,—"I will be a Christian. Whatever else I am or am not, I will live and I will die a Christian—a real, thorough Christian."

Thirdly, it is to have made up your mind that nothing whatever shall stand in the way—no object, however dear—no sin, however pleasant—no habit, however formed—there shall be no obstacle—nothing to grieve God wilfully, and to grieve Christ, but it should go, go to the winds. What is it compared to my soul, to peace, to life, to salvation? I cast it overboard—it is nothing—my soul is everything—let it go. Only let Christ find a "prepared way," and a "straight," open "path," and nothing to stop or hinder His loving entrance and His perfect work in my poor, wicked heart.

Fourthly, it is to have some great object in view,

something steadily in hand, something you are living up to,—the conquest of some particular sin which you hate,—the attainment of some point in the divine life which you see before you,—some good work which you will enterprize, something for love, something for God.

Fifthly, it is to be faithful and diligent in the use of means, as one who feels very weak, whose new warmth makes him feel very cold, who, in proportion to his earnestness, is painfully conscious of his sluggishness, —so that good people are made much of,—pious conversation is a great help by the way,—services and sacraments are food,—the Bible is God speaking,—prayer is breath,—communion with Christ is a necessity, —the Holy Ghost is a felt power within you,—Christ is a living presence,—God is a Father,—and the soul has obtained a holy violence that will not be denied, it "takes the kingdom of heaven by storm,"—it "commands God concerning His promises,"—it will scarcely brook delay,—"Now, Lord, now; for I perish; now, for Thy name's sake, for Thou hast said it."

And sixthly, it is to do all as in a very short time—"My Saviour will very quickly be here, I must keep all the approaches clear,—I must have done my work, —I must please Him when He comes,—I must be fit to go in with Him; and, as far as I can, I must be hastening on that blessed moment when my dear Lord will come."

That is earnestness. Between such a soul and God, it is evident that all is now open—there is nothing kept back—there is no barrier—there are no secondary aids—it is all honest daylight—the heart may be and is very weak and very sinful, but it is a true heart,

—that heart is right with God,—"The way of the Lord" is "prepared," and His "paths" are "straight."

And now let me be another voice. Let me be the voice of conscience, and let me ask you three things.

Do you believe that you are yet really in earnest about your soul? Are you as much in earnest about your soul as you are about some other things? Are you more? Are you earnest in proportion to the greatness of the subject? Is it the one thing of life, that is, religion—is it the one thing of life to you, the one thought, to have Christ, to enjoy Christ, to serve Christ, to be ready for Christ?

Secondly, is the way of God prepared? Is it a highway? Could He come in and find everything open and ready to receive Him? If, even while we were celebrating this Advent, that great Advent of all should come, and Christ should appear—are you, are you in that state, washed and holy, that He could look on you and say, "Come, ye blessed, ye blessed," and be "caught up to meet Him in the clouds, and so be for ever with the Lord?"

And thirdly, are all your "paths," your little "ways," your paths, are they all "straight," quite straight—in your business, in your relations of life, in your conversation, in your bedroom, in your religious profession, in your inner life, in your temper, in your feelings, is all "straight," and nothing "crooked?"

Believe me, brethren, that prepared way is the "way of pleasantness," and those straight paths are the "paths of peace."

But are you, are you earnest? You have been going on respectably a long time, perhaps religiously. But how is it as to *earnestness*? Are you earnest?

With a God so earnest in all He is doing for you,—with death so earnest all about you,—with an enemy so very earnest in your breast,—with so much to be done in that heart of yours before it is ready,—with such a work in the world to be done for God before you die,—with such issues at stake,—a Christ so near, it is time to be earnest!

Let me propose to you only this—go and do any one thing in the world you like earnestly for God. Pray and battle with a besetting sin,—some act of love,—a sacrifice of an idol,—a giving up something that grieves the Holy Ghost,—anything you like, anything conscience tells you. Only throw yourself into it heart and soul,—do it thoroughly, and I give you God's promise that you will at once taste the sweetness of earnestness. God will show you immediately He is pleased—there will be a token for good—and you will see more than you have yet seen, and to your great comfort, and you will feel at once in a measure "the salvation of God."

# REPENTANCE:

# The Second Advent Sermon

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, Dec. 4th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Repent ye; for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."—MATTHEW iii. 2.

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IT adds to the force of these words to remember that they were not John the Baptist's only, but also, as we read in the next chapter, Jesus Christ's. And it seems as if Christ loved them and adopted them because they had been His friend's words—for "when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison," from that time, "He began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

There is a feature in this teaching which deserves the closest observation. Repentance is generally made the child of fear, and persons are urged to repent on

this ground—that if they do not, some great evil will fall upon them. But here is the opposite. The motive by which both John and Christ pressed people to repent, is, that something very good and very happy is coming.

What "the kingdom of heaven" is exactly, it would be long to describe. But it is this—When Christ sets up His throne in any one man's heart, and becomes the one leading, ruling idea of that man's mind, that is the kingdom of heaven in the soul. When many feel the same, and incorporate themselves into a society, that Church-state, acknowledging Him the Head, governed by His laws, is again, in a larger sense, the kingdom of heaven. As such Christian communities increase and multiply themselves in various parts of the earth, all being united in Him, are more expansively still the kingdom of heaven. When Christ shall come to reign presently on this earth, and His empire will be dominant over all, and supreme, and visibly glorious, then this whole world will be the kingdom of heaven; and when the locality is changed, and the seat of power, and the abodes of the blessed, are transferred to the presence of God—then, it being no longer heaven in the Church, but the Church in heaven, the kingdom of heaven will be final, and consummated, and complete.

Whether, then, you take the expression in any one of these meanings, or in all, it equally signifies something very good and very happy, so good and so happy, that there is nothing in comparison with it worth the name. In very fact, it is the only happiness; for this alone is peace, and rest, and love that satisfies, and an abiding joy. Therefore, to say the "kingdom of

heaven is at hand," is the same—only much more—as if you had said, The holidays are coming,—or, To-morrow there will be a great victory,—or, The one you love best in all the world is at the door,—or, It is the eve of your wedding-day. And this is His great argument for repentance—Everything is going to be so pleasant, there is such a bright, glad time coming, therefore make haste, get rid of your sins, turn and be converted.

I do not, of course, mean to say that God always makes use of happiness as the lever which is to move a man to repent. We know that He has often employed a threatened judgment, as with Nineveh, or with the Jews, many times. And the Baptist himself said afterwards, to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." And even Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Still, judgment is God's strange word, and many more instances of repentance in the Bible were the result of kindness, and encouragement, and hope, than persons are generally aware.

For example, David's chief penitential Psalm was written after God had sent this comforting message to him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." Peter did not weep his bitter tears till Jesus had looked upon him that loving look. The gaoler at Philippi would have killed himself when he felt only fear, but when he knew that all was safe, and St. Paul spoke kindly to him, then "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And Jesus made the joy which it

would awaken in heaven the great reason why we should repent.

All these, and many more, illustrate the same thing, and virtually say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I feel very sure that this is true to our nature, and that there are very many who would be more actuated to make a change in their thoughts and conduct by an expectation of good, than they can ever be by any denunciation of evil, however terrible. I do not say that this is the case always, but I do assert, from my own experience, and from observation, and from reason, and I believe also from the Bible, that it is the case generally.

The cause is plain. Fear is a repellant, hope is an attraction. Sorrow shuts, joy opens the heart; coldness hardens, warmth softens. We are what we live up to. Put before a man something which is painful, and he retires back into himself, and clings to the pleasant. But let him see a near future which he likes, and he is content and glad to leave the past, and to go forth to that which he sees so tempting and inviting. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Had I, therefore, to do with the most abandoned man, or the most profligate woman, on the face of the earth, I would say, "God loves you dearly,—the Spirit of God, which is striving with you, shows that God loves you—there is a free pardon waiting for you—do not be afraid, do not be afraid to take it—you are to be a happy, a honoured, a useful Christian; more happy, more honoured, more useful because of your very sins; —there are good things coming, a life of peace and

holiness, and service, and an eternity with God—even now I see the dawn breaking for you upon the horizon. God wants you, God will have you, God will bless you." "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Let me say a word as to what God means, when He says, "Repent." Repentance is not remorse, though a sanctified remorse may become repentance. It is not sorrow for sin, though sorrow is one of its elements; it is not conviction, though it cannot be without it; it is not change of habits, though it leads to it. It is change of mind—that is, a literal translation of the word. It is a change of mind. It differs from conversion only in this—conversion is a change of action, repentance is a change of feeling. Therefore, it is greater than conversion, in the same degree as a change in the spring is greater than a change in the stream. I may paraphrase it—"Humble yourself, give up your old ways, and give your heart to God." That is repentance.

And let me further say this—Whether it be repentance, or whether it be conversion—and they are very much the same thing—it is not practically a thing which has to take place once in a man's life—neither does our baptism make much difference. We all need to "repent and to be converted" again and again. St. Peter needed it three years after he had been a disciple—"When thou art converted." And you need it—not only those amongst you, this morning, who may be called altogether unconverted—that is, who have never yet begun to think very seriously; but many, many others. Whose conscience does not bear witness to it? Who has not, whatever may have been his grace, who has not fell very low? who has not

done a great sin? who is not grovelling? who does not want a great change? who, at this moment, does not wish his heart quite different from what it is before Jesus comes? Therefore, I am free to say it to you all—to the religious and to the irreligious, to communicants and to non-communicants, to the world and to the Church,—my Advent call is to all, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I know, brethren, and you know, that you want a great change before Christ comes. There is one of you living on your self-indulgent life, and there is another of you a slave to his temper still, and there is another resisting every day a strong conviction, and there is another allowing a positive, secret sin, which at times his heart loathes, and there is another who is doing nothing at all for his Master, and there is another who has lately become very cold in his prayers, and there is another who feels so sinfully sad—are these ready?

And what shall I say to you? I will tell you what I see. Jesus Christ is soon coming, and you and He will soon meet. It does not much matter whether the meeting be on this earth, or whether it be in the clouds of heaven, or whether it be the other side the grave. You will meet very soon—He is coming, He is coming.

And what will He be when He comes? He is as beautiful as He is kind, and He is as kind as He is beautiful—He is smiling, and though you have been all you have been, He will smile on you. And with Him is a glorious pageant of the holy angels; and some whom you have known and loved better than any else in the whole world—they are coming with

Him. They are there—and what a welcome! what looks of affection! what gushing words of love and tenderness! There will be all lovely and delicious things to the body and the soul—holiness without its struggles—pleasures without their penalties—light without its shadows—company the gayest—conversation the cheerfullest—attachments the fondest. And you will know everything and understand deep mysteries, and you will revel in the luxury of the loftiest intelligence and of the highest feelings—and you will be always looking for new glories—and you will engage in delightful services—works that match with your new and glorified being, and which never weary, and never pall, and never disappoint. One while, you will rest in satisfied thought—and one while, you will wing your way among the worlds, and the scenery through which you travel will be the most lovely that can be conceived—and the enjoyments will never flag. Life will be all music, and every sense will have a feast, and every object will be a gem. And you will be there—you, a white-robed saint, a king. You will look on God, and will not be ashamed; and God will look on you, and He will be satisfied. It is coming—it is really coming. It may be very near, quite close. Up, decide, make haste, be ready. Your voice is needed for the singing—your seat is ready at the feast—your name trembles on the Saviour's lips—it is all love and joy—it only wants one thing—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

## DUTY:

# The Third Advent Sermon

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, December 11th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?"—LUKE iii. 10.

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THE final stage of religion is Duty. Everything else, however comforting, however holy, however true, is only its cradle. The maturity of man is his obedience. All the epistles lead up to duty. The sermon on the mount makes duty its climax. It is angel-like—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." It is the acme of the saints—"His servants shall serve Him." It made the summary of our Lord's own retrospect—"I have finished the work." And St. Paul treated everything else as of little worth in the comparison—mere passages—on to duty—"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of

hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."

If I had to define duty, I should say that it is doing what is right—that is, what conscience and the Bible tells us to do—in any relation of life. And since we have all a relation to God in everything we do, it is doing what is right towards God, or what is right towards man, for God's sake.

Never think of duty as a cold word. It is something better than love, for it is love in action. It is the parent's feeling to the full as much as it is the child's feeling. It is the earnestness of affection. A command to do goes beyond a promise to receive,—because a command is a promise and something more.

But we have to do this morning with duty as it connects itself with Advent. And let me mention one or two points in which duty and Advent meet.

In every Advent of Christ, whether it be those continual Advents by which He now approaches and knocks at the door of a man's heart—or whether it be the early harbingers and the tokens of His arrival, when He shall return to our earth again—it is of immense importance that we be able quickly to recognise and clearly to perceive it. Now keen religious perception always goes with a high moral state. It cannot be without it. You may account for it as you will. You may say that a good condition of body and mind are essential to the real working of the soul. Or you may say—which is still truer—that the power to see truth is a gift of God, and depends upon His blessing, and that He withholds the blessing from those who offend Him, and gives it to those whose life pleases Him—that the grieved Spirit shrinks back in His

delicacy, and retires from whatever is incorrect. Trace it as you may, the fact is certain, that a life of duty, and a ready apprehension of truth, always go together. It is a matter of daily occurrence.

A young man budding into life leaves the pious habits of his childhood, and adopts the follies, the indulgencies, the selfishness, the sins, which so often accompany early manhood. Immediately, you will observe, his mind grows sceptical,—his warped conscience becomes an uncertain guide,—he cannot discriminate between the very things which were, a little while before, as distinct to him as the light and the darkness,—he has lost his power to discern truth. Presently, that young man gives up his luxuries and irregular habits, and sets himself to some steady course of life. It is astonishing how at once the infidelity of his heart begins to go out—he returns to the simplicities of his earlier faith—his relieved mind, escaping as from a cloud, sees clearly and thinks accurately—and his restored cheerfulness and his humble bearing show it plainly, that he is returning to his old resting place,—"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

And those who shall first distinguish the dawn upon the horizon, and who shall taste and appreciate the beginning of the Advent, will be they who are the most practically carrying out their own convictions, and whose thought every morning is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Another link which fastens duty to Advent is this —that our Lord, when He comes, would wish to find us each at our own proper work, whatever that work may be. I gather this from three things.

First, as far as we have any record, Christ, when He came before, always chose those whom He found at their work. The call did not find them in their retirement, but in their engagements. I never wonder that St. Peter, when he was looking to see Christ again after His resurrection, said, "I go a fishing."

Next, Christ Himself has said it, speaking of domestic duties, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." And the subject of enquiry immediately He comes will be, not how we read, not how we prayed, not how we felt,—but how we acted,—what did we do one to another? And yet, if the approach of our Lord was announced, at any moment, would not many immediately be running to their rooms, running to their churches, running to their sacraments? I believe they would do better to keep on in their work, only taking care that it was done faithfully, earnestly, in an Advent spirit.

Thirdly, the Advent will be the end of all earthly work, and therefore it must find it done, else it will be undone for ever. Let me ask you—Is it done? Is there no duty which, if Christ were to come now, He would find unfulfilled,—nothing which your conscience has long told you to do, which you have meant to do, and which yet to-day is not done? Is there no duty of justice,—no debt unpaid,—no explanation that ought to have been given of some misunderstanding,—no compensation offered? Is there no duty of love,—love to another's feelings,—to another's soul,—no act of forgiveness,—no debt of long-protracted kindness,—no work without which you feel life would be incomplete,—but yet has never been begun, or, if begun, has

been left unfinished? Tell me, would you like life to leave off just as it is at this moment?

But I am wrong to treat it so—that is watching against Christ's coming—I want you to watch for it. I ask you this,—Would you not wish Christ to have the joy of finding you, when He comes, where you ought to be, copying His busy, useful life, and doing right and important things for His glory, with the very motive that may be blessed when He comes to see you?

Thus, then, duty strictly belongs to Advent.

But you will say, What is my duty? What shall I do? That is a question which, if it be honestly and religiously asked, God will be careful to answer to the conscience. I can only go a very little way, following now only the spirit of the replies which John the Baptist made to those who asked him the same question.

The publicans came and asked, "Master,"—that is, teacher—"what shall we do?" And he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." The publicans, or taxgatherers, were men of business—they may fairly be taken as representing trade, and the Advent duty inculcated upon trade was—accurate justice. We all have our commercial transactions, some more, some less,—but every one, almost every day, does business. And the Advent message to you, as such, is, Be accurate; for He who is coming is very accurate. When you go to buy, do not disparage what you are buying, and say, "It is nought, it is nought." Do not beat down prices, so as to grind the workers and the sellers. Never purchase anything which at the moment you feel you cannot pay for.

Never delay a payment a day after it is due, nor account anything your own till it is paid for.

And the seller—do not let him adulterate—do not let him take advantage of youth and ignorance when he is selling—do not let him conceal defects and alter facts—do not let him put a false colouring on—let him be content with a fair profit—let him never deprive any one in his employ of the rest which his body needs in the evening, and of the rest which his soul requires on the Sunday—let him give just wages, and be punctual in all his engagements—let the principle of religion be recognised, and its power be felt, and Christianity be a reality in the shop and in the office, down to the smallest thing.

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Gentleness, truth, moderation—the men of force, the men of power—the injunction running just in the line of danger—the duty curbing, and neutralizing, and sanctifying the besetting sin. For duty is almost always throwing into a good direction a part of the character which otherwise would have gone into a bad one.

We have not in this place now to do with military obligations, but we have to do with those who are responsible for strength,—strength of character, and influence of position. And this is God's rule, the stronger you are in anything, and the more you can do harm, be the more gentle. Take no advantage of station; but if you are high, be the more lowly in manner, in feeling, in condition, to every one. And do not be ambitious of earthly things, but consider

your position as given you with certain responsibilities which you are to fulfil, even as you would wish to be doing when Christ comes; the greatest in this world being the humblest, that they may be ready to meet Him, who was at once the very greatest and the very humblest that ever trod this earth.

And when all the people came, he said to them, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." Love, love in familiar exercise,—love in common-places,—love in sympathy,—love in giving—charity. It is not duty to make equality between all men, for that would frustrate the plan of God's government—but it is duty to lean towards equality, and to be always trying to lessen the tremendous inequality which there is in society between man and his fellow. It is duty to take care that your neighbour's want never rises up in judgment against your super-abundance. It is duty to endeavour never to let a day pass without your taking away—if it be only a grain—from the heap of suffering, and adding—if it be only a grain—to the heap of happiness which there is in this world. We are none of us giving as we ought. What the line is, no one can say to another, but very few indeed are going near the line. Perhaps no safer rule could be laid down than this—how much would you make your gift at this moment, if you knew that Christ was just coming, and would find you in the act of giving it? What proportion of your income would you allot to the poor and the gospel, if you expected Christ would appear now, and ask to see your account-book?

Once more. The Pharisees and the Sadducees—so

St. Matthew relates it—the Pharisees and the Sadducees came; and to them the Baptist, always pointing to the Advent, said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." This was to professors. And remember, so are you. You have made a great profession—you have professed a deep repentance—"poor, miserable sinners." "Bring forth fruits," fruits "worthy," that is, adapted in their character, and matching in their degree, to the repentance which you say you have, —soft-hearted fruits, fruits that seem to try to redeem the past—great fruit. How often you have said—said to a fellow-creature, said to God,—"I am sorry, I am sorry." Where is the fruit? Your sins were very large, and they need a large repentance, and your large repentance needs a large harvest of duty. Go and do it. Stand between the memory of the sins which are past, and the judgment that is near—or rather, I would say, stand between the sense, the deep, loving, happy sense of the sins which are forgiven, and the coming of Him to whom you owe it all. And so make life one great gratitude from your soul, that when "the Beloved" comes, comes "to His garden"—for at that moment, this earth will be more Paradisaical than Eden—when He comes to "His garden," He may find multitudes of duties ready to His hand, and may "eat His own pleasant fruits."

## EXPECTATION:

# The Fourth Advent Sermon

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, Dec. 18th, 1870,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"One mightier than I cometh."—LUKE iii. 16.

OUR step to-day is from Duty to Expectation. And yet it is scarcely a step, for expectation is a duty, almost the highest of duties. Has not God made our very form in this to be an allegory—the face onward, and in man, differing in this from all other creatures, upward? And is not there an instinct in every human mind,—sometimes, indeed, a snare and a sorrow, but far oftener an elevation and a joy, to be always going on in the future, and living in the fancies of a near or a far to-morrow?

And what is the man who, having no expectations, is always casting back his thoughts into a retrospect? Almost universally a melancholy man.

And what is the man who sees nothing but the

present? A drudge in his work, and a sensualist in his pleasures.

But what is the man who throws himself into that which is beyond him? At least, an energetic man, and, if he be a Christian, a happy one.

Have you never observed that every one's character is determined by what he is living up to? Why is the Mahommedan an idle and self-indulgent man? Because he lives up to a corporeal, and indolent, and sensuous heaven. Why is the Brahmin a man of apathy? Because, after all his transmigrations, he has nothing to expect—according to his creed—but annihilation, absolute annihilation. Why does the believer grow holy and loving, but because he is always realizing in his mind the heaven of holiness and love to which he is going? Certainly, expectation is a duty.

But God has done with this faculty of expectation, what He has done with all the natural powers and habits of the human mind—He has sanctified it, and elevated it. And this is the way God has done it—He has thrown into it first truth, then affection, and then great delight, so He has made it hope. What is it? Expectation with desire. You may evidently expect what you do not desire—and as clearly you may desire what you do not expect. But if the two concur and blend—and the more they blend—the stronger the desire is, and the clearer the expectation is—in the same degree it is hope—hope—that true, real, natural, healthy, active, cheerful state of any living man. What is happiness? To be happy to-day, and to be sure that you will be happier to-morrow, and that the to-morrow is more important than the to-day. It is

quite certain that God intended that man should be ruled by hope. From the beginning, it has been the great principle of His moral government of this world. The moment that man fell, and the present became unhappy, the antidote was hope—"I will put enmity." "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Observe, at once, the mind was sent off into the future for its comfort.

It was the same with Abraham—he had nothing, he was to have everything.

The Jews lived by their prophecies. All sacrifice speaks the same language. Everything in the Old Testament was prospective. The ancient Israelites were always kept upon the tiptoe of expectation.

Nor less, but rather more, it is the key of the New Testament. What the Messiah of Bethlehem was under the former dispensation, Christ made the Holy Ghost to His disciples. Wait, wait till you receive the promises.

Then, for awhile, a very little while, but a while, the thoughts of the Church, bereaved of their Master's visible presence, all pointed to Pentecost. Pentecost passed, the Holy Spirit came. From that moment the eye of every Christian was immediately directed to the Second Advent. You know how that image filled the minds of the apostles—how it stood out the focus and the centre of the Church's comfort, in all their epistles, —how it was so prominent and so large to their view, that it was like a thing always close at the very door.

And now what is the aim, the consolation, the theme, the life of the whole Church, but the coming back of her dear Lord? And when He comes,—after that I do not know,—but I expect that there will be another

future to look forward to still—and probably another, and another, and another. For so inwrought is hope into our very being—so essential is it, as far as we know to all happiness, that it can scarcely be doubted but that for ever some new acquisition, some further attainment, will be stretching on before us, even as those holy angels have the desire continually, and doubtless the delight, of seeing more and more of the work, and the character, and the mind of God for ever and ever.

But what I wish you to notice in this long line of expectation is, that the next thing in the succession is always greater and better than that which preceded it. The series is always rising—every prophecy has its range of fulfilment—first, an early and an historical one—then an inward and a spiritual one—then an evangelical one in the life and death of Jesus Christ—then an ultimate one in yet future glories.

David's reign was one appointed in the prospective; but David's reign was only the shadow of the higher empire of Christ. Zion's power and beauty were predicted; but chiefly as the type of the Church of the Gospel. The gospel itself was infinitely greater than all its foreshewing; Jesus was a greater prophet than Moses. And though John the Baptist was the greatest born of woman, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven, that is, the least and the youngest in the new dispensation, they are greater in knowledge and in privilege than John the Baptist himself.

And we have Christ's own warrant to say that the Holy Ghost was a larger gift to the Church than even His own personal presence—more pervasive, more effective. While the coming again of Christ, and the

conditions that will follow, are so inexpressibly beyond all that it passeth the power of the heart to conceive all that it will be, in love and loveliness, to the whole world.

And then higher and higher still, in ranges where the mind loses itself in floods of glory, the swelling tide rolls on and never stops.

If you could read it so, brethren, whenever anything happy comes to you—an answered prayer, a gift of God—you may always hear it—saying, "I am only a pledge of something else; there is something better than I am behind." All along, at every stage, the principle is the same, and the words of the Baptist have their echo and their counterpart everywhere—"One mightier than I cometh."

We are taught it in Adam,—we hear it from Moses, —it is eloquent in Daniel,—it is the burden of John, —it is the literal teaching of Christ,—it is the breathing of the Holy Ghost—"A mightier than I cometh."

Why it should have pleased God to place everything in such a scale of ever-ascending grandeur and goodness, we can only faintly glimpse. But, assuredly, it is always exalting Him in His unapproachable height, while it is always humbling us in our sense of ignorance and preparation. The very distance of the Almighty becomes the greater when we measure it by the number of the steps by which we are to ascend to it. And yet, at the same time, it is good for us, and animating, and very helpful to every better energy of the mind, and every daily obligation, to have every moment before us, not too far off, some blessed epoch for which and to which we are continually working.

The target of expectation to which faith points the arrows of desire, so making hope, is unquestionably the Advent.

Of the Advent which we shall commemorate next Sunday, at Christmas, I do not wish to say now more than only this—Expect it practically, and arrange it deliberately, and throw all the love you can into your Christmas plan. Meet it in the spirit of that great gift of the Father, and that lowly birth of the Son, of which we are going to keep the anniversary. Do not arrange only to feast yourself, but also to feed others. Rather, would not it be very Christmas-like if those who feast always should for once feed, and those who feed scantily all the year should for once feast. Have your sweet home-gatherings, and your bright and merry circle; but remember that there is also the wider fellowship of the Church and the whole family of God. Let many that you love be there around your hearth; but do not let Jesus be the one Friend shut out. Provide your pleasures,—but do not forget that the pleasure of pleasures is the luxury of doing good, —that a good conscience always keeps high festival, and that to every Christian Christmas is Christ.

But it will be a poor Christmas to all, and unsatisfying, if from the First Advent the heart does not leap to the Second. For here, the pleasures will cloy— there, they will be new and fresh for ever. Here, all men have not the heart to carol; there, all will sing. Here, the gayest flowers of your feast will fade; there, all will be amaranth. Here, the party will break up; there, they will go no more out. Here, the deaths that are come, and must come, will throw their long shadows; but there, will be life, the ecstacy of life.

Here, some seats will be empty; there, we fondly trust they will all be filled. Here, sin and self will come in and mar everything; there, all will be pure, and there will be no self, and there will be no sin. Here, the King is veiled, and we see truth in a mirror; there, we shall "Behold Him in His beauty," and we shall "know even as we are known." Here, the flesh will clog the spirit in its rising; there, the body will be the soul's light wing. Here, the contrast is always saddening; there, "we shall awake up in His likeness, and we shall be satisfied with it."

Therefore, press on from Advent to Advent—from love to love—from joy to joy—from Christ to Christ. For every weak thing says it in its weakness, and every strong thing answers it in its strength, "One mightier than I cometh."

Your minister delights to own to it in his felt impotence;—Satan crouches to it in his forced confession;—every pleasant thing and every beautiful thing sings it as it flies away from you;—the angels that minister to you, though they "excel in strength," acknowledge it with full accord;—even the very Christ of the past, looking forward to the Christ of the future, records it to the great comfort of His Church, and to the glory of His Father, "One mightier than I cometh."—Whom, when He comes, may we all meet with glad and ready heart—for Whom let us now make our offerings to the poor, and the afflicted, and the suffering ones, in our County Hospital—and to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour, might, glory, majesty, dominion and love, henceforth and for ever more. Amen.

# A New Year's Motto:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, January 1st, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God."—Psalm lxxi. 16.

A GOOD resolve is itself an offering. Do not think that because to break a resolution is a pity and a sin, that therefore it would have been better not to have made it. The state of heart which never resolves, is worse than that which undertakes, but has not force enough to sustain what it has undertaken. And do not yield to the temptation of feeling—"I have made so many promises which have come to nothing, that I never will make another; I have so often set out and failed, that I have no heart to begin again." The great test of a man is how he can rise up from defeat, and still believe in victory. And the part of wisdom is to make the bitter experiences of the past the lesson-books of a wiser future.

We should miss, therefore, one of the great intentions why God has appointed the cycles of nature,

"for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years," if we did not take occasion to-day, whatever the retrospect may be, to enter into some new covenant with our own conscience and with God.

Let me say more. All life must be made up of new starts—each one as fresh and earnest as if it were the first; and to maintain that freshness in repeated enterprise is the secret of all real success. Therefore, I would place it not only at the margin, but if I may, all along that reach of time which is now opening before us, a motto for life—"I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

I will ask you at once to observe equally the two thoughts that compose the sentence,—"I will go," the language of active, frequent, glad progression. Wherever duty is, wherever I see a hand beckoning me, wherever I hear a divine voice calling me in my proper path, "I will go." But no less, balancing it and justifying it, in all modesty and holy caution, turning rashness into courage, and sanctifying the fire of an impulsive nature, without which the "I" will be presumption, and the "will" will be blasphemy,—not as the Babel-builders,—not as the Israelites, who went up the hill above Kadesh-Barnea,—not as the son who said too quickly and too boldly, "I go, sir,"—not as the foolish and bewitched Galatians, who stopped their running,—but as that great man who spoke so carefully and so well, measuring himself and God, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," deliberately, circumspectly, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

I know nothing which conveys such an impression of the difficulty of being a Christian, or of the power and the character of the enemies with which we have to contend, as the space which is given in the Bible to the thought of "strength," and the number of times in which that word recurs. If you have never observed it, it will repay the labour to reckon them up, and I

believe you will have to count literally by hundreds. It may be partly, perhaps, because it is the natural metaphor of an athletic and warlike age, living in the fastnesses of nature. But still more, it is to teach from generation to generation, what we are, how very weak,—what He is, how sufficient,—and what they are that rise up against us, how amazingly strong.

But now, it is of the first importance that we should understand, as accurately and as practically as we can, what is meant by "the strength of the Lord God." In Himself, His strength is in the clouds, and the strength of the hills is His also, He is infinite in power, and His strength is from everlasting.

But "the going forth" of His strength is the arm. Hence we have it often—"Thou hast a mighty arm," "Strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand," "Mine arm shall strengthen him," or, more beautifully still, "Be Thou their arm every morning," "With His own right hand, and with His holy arm, hath He gotten to Himself the victory."

And what is God's arm? In the metaphorical language of the Bible, the arm of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? He"—the arm—"He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Or, again, "The Lord God will come, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He"—the arm of the Lord—"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm." It is evident that "the arm of the Lord" is Christ. For as the arm is one with the head, and by it the head executes its will, and manifests its power,—just so it is between God and Christ, Christ is God, as the arm is the man; and by Christ, God executes all His counsel, and shows forth all His goodness. Therefore "the strength of the Lord God" to man is Christ, and to "go in the strength of the Lord

And what end? In one mighty tide, every creature of God, either willingly or unwillingly, is borne along to that end. You love that end, and that end is safe, and that end is the glory of God. What strength is there! You travel on to a larger result, and the victory at last is inevitable. For if you can receive it, you march on a destiny. Elected of God, by ways all chosen for you, and appointed long ago, you journey on to pre-ordained issues. The everlasting undertakings of the Almighty are there—you may be a feather, but you are carried along by the resistless currents of the Eternal will. And know this—that the sense of a fated life is indomitable; it may be abused, it may become the most awful of all possible dangers, but it is God's truth, and truth is strength.

I gather up the great constituents of "the strength of the Lord God." You go in oneness with Christ,—you are at peace,—you carry a presence,—you are borne along upon the promises,—and you ride upon destiny.

The strength of Sampson lay in the seven locks of his hair. What were those seven locks? Only tokens of covenant, links of faith, which, kept, were conductors of Divine power; but when they were severed, then, Sampson was only man!

In this allegory we read ourselves. Maintain your communion with God by prayer, by faith, by secret communion, by sacraments, and you are positively charged with heavenly influence. Break it, and you are left negative.

There is a solemn consciousness on a day like this that we are all passing on into a great unknown. Abraham-like, we go out, "not knowing whither we go;" but if only we have Abraham's faith, the record of each of us will presently be as certain as it was with Abraham and Sarah, "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and to the land of Canaan they came."

Only, as you set out, and have new and strange

things, of which you will have perhaps, to say, "We have not passed this way heretofore," do not look at outward things, at events, at politics, at circumstances, —do not lean on any arm of flesh, "nor put your trust in princes, nor in any child of man;" do not walk as if you could hold up one step, or guide yourself at one turn,—do not look down into your own wicked heart; and think of your own poor, weak, miserable self,—but keep your eye upon One, rest on One, and then say unfalteringly, "Come what may, I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I do not know my road, but I do know Him."

Many a call to severe duty may, and if you are living to any purpose, must, come to you this year. And that duty may rise high above your own true estimate of the level of your own power. But remember Moses at the bush. Do not think of your own slowness of speech, or your unlearnedness, or your inability for the work. So it be duty, duty is always power. It is incredible what strength there is in the feeling, "It is duty." "Go in this thy might" of a felt inadequacy; put aside all other considerations, and answer at once to that call of duty, "I will go, I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

And though that road lie among many things which you know will be special temptations and dangers to you,—though there are precipices on every hand,— though it seems like casting yourself down headlong, —go, you will be kept; it is now "thy way"—and "they shall keep thee in all thy ways." Go, and the good angels shall go with thee. "Go in the strength of the Lord thy God."

And when trouble comes, and big waves roll darkly, do not be afraid to go in, do not tremble on the shore. The very waters which should have drowned you, will be the walls that will protect you. You will go through dryshod, and you will raise your anthem clear and loud on the other side, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

And down the last valley, when you reach it—and it may not be far off—down the last valley, take care that you go with a good courage. Die bravely—cast yourself absolutely on Him when there is no other; and be ready in that hour to say it, as one who has proved Christ too well to doubt Him there, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

We all need, and I trust we all wish to be, stronger characters. And this day I set before you the secret of all real strength. The epitaph of the last year is—is it not?—weakness. Let the stamp on the forehead of the new year be strength,—"I am a little child, I do not know how to go out or to come in;" but "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

With that sling, and with that stone, the very babe in Christ, going in the name of the Lord of hosts, shall lay low the hydra-head of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with that "new threshing instrument, the worm Jacob shall thresh the mountains."

Therefore, ye servants of Christ, go on—go on to a higher life, to a truer service, to a purer happiness, to a more heavenly mind. And with this prayer "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace"—that we may all know more and more the power of that benediction, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Him;" and that we may, in life and death, so "make mention of Him and His righteousness only," that we may "go from strength to strength," until, to the God of gods, "appeareth every one of us in Zion."

# Concentration:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, January 15th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"This one thing I do."—PHILIPPIANS iii. 13.

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THE secret of all moral force, of all spiritual success, of all reality, is concentration. And what is concentration? The whole man gathering himself up to a point, —oneness of being, body, soul, spirit—the will, the judgment, the energy, in unity. And what is unity? The reflection of the one great God. What a beautiful thing is unity!—beautiful, when all the attributes of the Godhead meet together, and we call that oneness love,—beautiful, in that world of harmonies, where ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of blended voices, fall together upon the ear, sweet as the music of confluent waters, —beautiful, in that privileged home where God's promises come to pass, and all beneath that roof, without one jarring element, are one in heart, and one in mind,—beautiful, in that knit Church, bound together through all its memberships by holy and

loving office, on which God, looking down, sees His image, and is glorified,—beautiful, in that man, who, having learnt the pervading power of the love of Jesus, and living now with a single aim, his heart fixed, his desires centered, his whole being strung, can say of all that now makes it to him life to live,—"This one thing I do."

I wish, this morning, as a second master-key for the year, to give you the thought of concentration—oneness of character; and I wish to endeavour to carry it out a little in detail.

It is evident that there are two ways in which we may set about to make religion "one thing."

There is the exclusive way. A man may determine that he will have nothing to do with anything which is not essentially religious,—that he will study one book, he will mix only with one class of society, he will forego all amusement of every kind, all games, all pursuits, which people of the world like,—he will have nothing to do with any political affairs,—he will be occupied only with spiritual things,—life shall be Christ, and Christ shall be life.

And there is the inclusive or comprehensive way. Equally this man says, "Life shall be Christ, and Christ shall be life, but I will do it, not by casting out, but by gathering in,—I will read widely, that all my knowledge may circulate round God's truth, that I may concentrate my learning to His service;—I will go into any company, yet nowhere where I cannot carry my Master, and everywhere to try and speak of Him;—I will love all men, but specially them that believe;—I will see the good in every one, and hope the good which I cannot see?—I will enjoy God's handiwork around on every side, and read lessons of truth and hymns of praise from all the pages of creation;—I will find zest and pleasure in all that does not take my heart from Jesus, if so be that by those pastimes and recreations I may the better refresh my

powers, commend my religion to the world, and have a larger door whereby to extend His truth;—I will try to be a leavening principle in every circle of life;—I will enlarge that circle to the widest extent to which I can make all things really converge to one centre;—my God shall be my God in everything, and my everything shall be my everything in God."

By these two rules of life, which every man may take, so he be guided by his conscience, that he may serve God the better, that man is to be respected and honoured, and doubtless he will be accepted of Almighty God. But there can be no question that he who finds his "one thing," and does his "one thing" everywhere, making his oneness out of many parts, not only is more likely, by God's grace, to be a useful and influential man, but he is treading the nearest in the footsteps of his Master, and he is the closest also to Him who draws His own unity out of the infinite ranges of the diversities of the millions of His creatures.

To make life as it ought to be, "one," the great requisite is to have one fixed aim. It is the want of aim which makes the life of most of you so weak, so uncertain, so capricious. It is aimless, therefore it is disconnected;—it is disconnected, and therefore there is no cohesion; and one man is many men, for his views, and his feelings, and his character, and his conduct, are at one time so very unlike what they are at another time, that he can scarcely be called the same being. You meet him in the morning, and he is one man; you see him in the evening, and he is another man; and the cause is the want of a gathering-point.

Now the far, high, gathering-point, high enough to sustain life, is only one—the glory of God. No inferior motive will do. You must settle it with yourself absolutely—"Henceforth I will live to the glory of God,—I owe everything to God,—I will give everthing to Him,—I will live merely to God's glory."

Brethren, let me speak to you. Some of you did once live for another object. You lived for pleasure,—you lived for the world,—you lived for self,—you lived for sin,—may I say it?—you lived for the devil. And that "one thing" you did well. You served that master with a very good service. What you have to do now is to throw as much heart into the new pursuit as you did once into the old, and let the new one be the glory of God. "I, before I die, I will do something for God;"—the God who has borne with you,—the God who has loved you, drawn you, pardoned you, saved you, kept you, honoured you, loved you from everlasting, and will love you to everlasting again,—who has done everything for you.

It is the right end of a man for two reasons.

One, because all the lines of life go up to it. You can eat to it, and drink to it, you can wake, and you can sleep, you can pick a flower, you can gaze on the stars of heaven, you can buy, and you can sell, you can love, and you can marry, and you can sing, and you can pray, and you can repent, and you can feel forgiven, and you can go out, and you can come in, and you can do a kind act, or you can set out again, or bear a cross, or you can be happy, or be sad to it, you can live to it, and you can die to it. Therefore, it is a man's proper end.

Also, it is God's end. It is the end for which God is,—it is the end for which He gave Christ, it is the end for which He does everything,—it is the end for which He chose you, made you, loved you,—it is an end beyond your happiness,—it is an end beyond your holiness,—it is an end, beyond heaven, the glory of God.

Do not say, "It would not be right in me to do anything for my glory, and therefore it cannot be right in God to do anything for His glory." The reason why you may do nothing for your glory, is because God may, and must, and does do everything for His own

glory. The glory is God's, and therefore you may not take glory because it is not yours. Were there no God, you might take the glory; but now, the foundation of the life of all humility is that God will have all the glory.

This settled, then define your scope—the glory of God. Whatever you feel you can really do and glorify God—wherever you feel that you can go and glorify God,—there go and that do. But if conscience and common sense tell you, "If I went to that place, I could not glorify God; if I did that, I could not glorify God;" then that act, that place, lie out of bounds; it will be a false, a dangerous, and perhaps a fatal track if you take it.

Under this end of ends, and subservient to it, it is the duty of every one to have some distinct Christian purpose always before him. There is not a more beautiful sight in the world than a young man in whose heart the divine life has been kindled, and who is now setting about, as the one great object of life, to cultivate the grace that God has given him. See that young man—his soul is always in his hand. See how careful he is not to go anywhere, or scarcely to speak to any one, if it will hurt him,—how carefully he walks,—how he studies his motives and his thoughts,—how you can see him constantly in secret prayer,—how unhappy he is whenever that inward light fades a little, and how very happy when the light begins to burn brightly again. You can see that he is saying, "I am living for Christ; I have given up all the sins I loved; now my soul is everything to me;"—"One thing I do."

And then second, only second, to this, comes a purpose. It cannot, of course, be the same with every man, neither can it be the same even to the same man at all periods of life. What is wanted is not this or that purpose, but simply a purpose, a purpose; not this or that work, but a work,—a work of which Christ is

the sum, love is the motive, and God's glory is the end. A parent may find such a purpose in the education of children, or the care of a household. Or a child may find it in study, or, in after years, in the attendance on a parent. A teacher may find it in the duties of tuition; a servant, in the work of service; a man of business, in mercantile affairs; a labourer, in his daily labour. Provide only that the spirit of Christ be diffusive, and that the intention be dedicate,—to please God, to honour God, and to do something to promote God's kingdom,—then, a Christian can follow his usual vocation, and yet say all the day long, "This one thing I do."

But if there are some of you whose paths are not so appointed you, or if—which is the case for the most part—you have, over and above, much leisure and frequent opportunity, then it is impossible, if the love of God be really in the heart, it is impossible that you will not find for yourself some other work for God by which you may express your love, and obey the great law under which you hold your being. Think you that it is for nothing that God has made you a member of a Church? Have you no work to do for that Church? Think you that it is nothing that God has placed you in the midst of a world, so full of suffering, and ignorance, and sin? Think you that it is nothing that you cannot take a step here, but there is a work that springs up under your feet for you?

What that work may be—whether it is to lay yourself out for the conversion of souls,—whether it is to minister consolation,—whether it is to teach,—whether it is a mission of mercy for the fallen,—whether it is the visitation of the poor and destitute,—what enterprise it may be for God,—that is a matter for private conversation with your minister,—that is a matter between every man and his own heart,—that is a matter between every one and God. All I say is, that it is not too much to assert, in the majority of

cases, that the having or the not having such a work for God in hand is nothing less than a test of the reality of your religion, or, at least, it is a guage by which you may measure, as by a sure index, the rise and the fall of the grace of your soul. Life must speak, and the end of life is action.

It is marvellous how, when you have a work in hand for God, it will brace up your whole being. Only remember this—whatever you do undertake for God, do it heartily. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that there are many of you who are doing some work for God; but the religious work is secondary to the ordinary life. Better almost not to work at all than not to put your soul into the work you do for that Master. O think how, from end to end of his life for you, He could say, "This one thing I do." And should not it be your motto, in all your life for Him—"This one thing I do?"

Still, while I say this, let me guard myself lest I smite those whom God has not wounded, or lest I lead any to write hard things against themselves which God has not written. A child of God, who is sick, or very weak, or aged, or in special affliction, can do as good a work for God, perhaps better, than those active workers. By the quiet influence of his own room, by wise and loving words, he shows of truth and Jesus to those who go into his chamber; by more frequent and urgent intercessory prayer up in that upper room, by a cheerful face and the eloquence of patience, by a hidden joy and a silent testimony, he is a fellow-worker with all the martyrs and the confessors, and he has a right, not one whit less than Paul, with "the care of all the churches," to take the witness of his own conscience and to say, "This one thing I do."

And let me just say this in passing. Do you feel the trouble of wandering thoughts in prayer and in church? Why? Because your outer life is not

concentrated. If you would live a braced live everywhere, you would find fixedness of thought in your devotions.

The secret of this concentrated habit of mind, evidently lies in that feeling which every man has as soon as he knows he is forgiven. From that moment that a man feels he is forgiven, the value of life is just what service for Christ he can put into it. Then, a spring, a motive power, is there, which is always encoiling and sending him in one direction. How could it not be so, "seeing we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again?" "Unto themselves?" No, for Christ, for eternity; they will soon be here,—my Saviour will soon be here,—and I must have done something for Him before He comes—I must be ready for Him when He comes. And it is eternity, eternity.

You have stood upon our shores, and you have seen a ship under full press of sail making for her destination. How she throws aside the seaweed and the waves—how straight amidst the currents she holds her bow—how she strains upon her way, and goes resolutely to her point! The winds are strong, but the helm overrules the winds, and turns them to account: life is going on on board that vessel in many forms, but they are all moving on together to the port,—there is a master principle which everything obeys, and they all delight to have it so.

And as that ship pursues her bent and often homeward course, it is an emblem to you every day you look at it, of the condition of the life of that man who has had the grace given him to say, "This one thing I do." For so, by just such singleness of purpose, such independence of external things, such a straight unbending way, the great purpose of life is to be gained, heaven is to be won, and God glorified.

# Elevation:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, January 22nd, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom."—MATTHEW xx. 21.

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THE subject to which I wish to call your attention to-day is the duty, I might almost say the necessity, of having high aims in religion. We have already considered, as topics of the opening year, strength and concentration. I wish now to add a third, elevation.

Doubtless there are many in this church, to-day, whose one great paramount want is conversion. But there are a great many more whose want is elevation, —a loftier object, a higher range, a truer standard.

But yet, conversion and elevation are not so distinct as they might, at first sight, appear. I am persuaded that many persons would be much more likely to give themselves up to the grace of God, that is, to be converted, and become real Christians in heart, if they had worthier conceptions of what it is to be a

Christian,—if they set before them grander things to be and do. Elevation may be the parent of conversion.

But we cannot disguise the fact that altogether we are living at a very low level,—that we are content with a very poor state of things. It is partly, perhaps, the natural result of our going on week after week, year after year, in one routine, with the same services, the same ministers, the same voices, the same subjects, the same influences, the same ideas,—with little to raise, and nothing to rouse. And then, if you add to this the sluggishness of nature, which always hates effort, and that law of gravitation which holds in the spiritual world to the full as much as it does in the natural,—it is no wonder that there is a sameness and a dullness, and that we get into grooves of thought and habit, so that to-day is only a repetition of yesterday. Probably many of you had much finer aspirations when you first began to be religious than you have now. And yet, a constant mediocrity, a dead flat, is almost the worst possible state into which a soul can get. What would grieve and surprise an angel more than the monotony of Christians?

Therefore, because I feel that we are stagnant, that we are dwarfed, I want to raise you, I want you to shoot the arrows of expectation higher, and to have more spiritual ambition. We have had great things done for us, and we are getting very near to a great eternity, and we have to do with a great God, and we have great promises, and we have a right to desire great things, and to look for great things, and to command great things. Therefore, let me speak to you of great things.

Is ambition wrong? What is ambition? Ambition is an instinct of nature, a desire to rise; and, like all

other instincts, capable of good and evil. Satan took hold of it, and said, "Ye shall be as gods." Jesus enshrined it, "Ye shall sit on thrones:" "Be ye perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect." When a man wishes to go out of his own line into another, to which, evidently, God has not called him, his ambition is wrong. When a man tries to get to the very top of his own line, his ambition is right. When a man seeks great things for himself, only for himself, it is a worldly ambition. When a man pursues great things for usefulness, for the Church, for Christ, it is the same principle, but it is consecrated, pious, and good.

We have now to do only with religious ambition. That lies unquestionably in your own proper line, and it is for God, and for God's glory. Therefore, if my two tests be right, that ambition is righteous and true.

Salome, Zebedee's wife,—Zebedee himself at that time probably being dead—came to Jesus with her two sons, James and John. The moment they chose to come, according to both St. Matthew's and St. Mark's narrative (it is not mentioned by St. Luke or St. John), was just as Christ, having described in more detail than He had ever previously used, His approaching sufferings and death, spoke of His resurrection. Then at the thought of the resurrection, came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons. The request which they jointly made—St. Mark does not mention the mother—admits of two constructions. Most people see in it only presumption. To me it seems—though mixed, of course, with some ignorance—legitimate and noble. It was not Peter asked it, but the loving, modest John, who

leant on the bosom and knew the most of his dear Master's mind,—and his brother, the proto-martyr of the apostles—and their mother—and a mother can never be too ambitious for her child. What they desired was spiritual dignity, and still more, nearness to Jesus—a nearness which had already been secured to them in a kingdom which they all expected, of which Christ had spoken very particularly in the preceding chapter, and which probably they identified with Christ's rising again, of which they had just heard—"Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom."

Jesus never reproved this desire. He said, indeed, that what they asked, they asked ignorantly, and He stated the conditions, the stern conditions, upon which such honours were to be attained—to drink His cup of sorrow, and to be baptized with His baptism of blood. He declared openly—and mark this—that though Jesus is to allot the places and the degrees in glory, yet it must be according to previous preparation and God's election. Still, he never blamed those Boanerges for emulating that high position. On the contrary, when the ten were moved with indignation against the two brethren, Jesus did not confirm their censure, but rather He reproved them—for we read, "*But* Jesus called them"—that is, the ten—"Jesus called the ten unto Him, and said, 'Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.'"

I gather, therefore, that Christ did not condemn, in those two ardent men—though they might in some

things be mistaken—that heavenly ambition which at other times He had Himself most carefully inculcated. Therefore I feel free the more to press it upon you now in everything—to set before you a higher aim, and, like James and John, to covet and pray for great things.

And, first, in your inner life, and your personal character. Say you are a Christian—are you a saint? Is it really a holy life you are leading? Are you not a very small Christian? You pray, you read your Bible every day, you frequently think about God through the day, and about good things, and you often speak to Him by acts of silent communion,—you enjoy church and the sacraments, occasionally you talk upon religious subjects, and sometimes your conversation is quite spiritual—you try to walk consistently, you are struggling against a besetting sin—Christ is really your only ground of confidence, and you sincerely desire to please Him, and to be like Him, and to dwell with Him for ever.

But yet, there is a state far above and beyond all this. There is such a tender, melting, and weeping state of heart, with such a deep view of sin, such loving, fond, intimate, gushing feelings towards a dear, felt, all-absorbing Saviour, as no words can express, and nobody can understand who has not felt it. There are exercises of the closet which are living interviews with God, sweet voices heard, and echoes quick and true. There are wrestling prayers, and clear victories won in secret, which send us down radiant with joy and strength. There is an inward presence always felt, and which leaves its reflection on the very face, on the voice, the accent, the manner, the whole outer man. There is a humility, not by

effort, but inwrought, which puts a man sometimes into the dust, and always into the lowest seat, and which tones down everything into a Christ-like gentleness. There is a faith which walks as among shadows, and to which unseen things are plainly the substances. There is a love which can scarcely see another's faults, but which is always drawing veils, which never speaks to another's detriment, which goes forth to every one, which is a very fountain of perpetual kindness, and could kiss a worm. There is a self-denial which is always subjugating the body and mortifying little things, and bringing every thought into subjection to the dominion of Christ. There is a frame of mind which is one continual incense of worship and praise going up to the throne of God. There is a heart so full of all that it has tasted and felt that it cannot choose but speak of Jesus everywhere. There is a walk so close with God, that, Enoch-like, it seems only to want one more step to be translation. There is a heavenly-mindedness which is a very well-spring of purity and peace. And there is an expectation and longing for the Second Advent which knows neither death nor parting, a ripeness always ready for the gathering.

And these are they—these men of sorrow, and loving and lowly hearts, and earnest, and braced, and devoted lives, these are the men for whom the places are preparing on the right hand and on the left in the kingdom of God. And this is that which you must be before you die. This is that which, if you are wise, you will try to begin to be to-day.

Secondly, let me urge you to begin to take a higher estimate of the work which you have to do for God in this world. Remember, you were created and re-

created for work. You have been now for a long time a professing—why should I say professing?—a real child of God. What have you done? If you have done something, and feel it to be nothing, as you will, then to you, the real workers in this church, I need not speak—only to say this,—raise it, raise it, put more Christ into it, have more faith in your work, do it more lovingly.

But oh! how many there are among you—I must say it, brethren—who are really doing nothing, and attempting nothing, for Christ. How often have I asked you, in vain, utterly in vain. And is this the measure of the effect of all my preaching? Are the definite things I propose to you, which ye do not, the real index of the acceptance of everything I say? O then for higher preaching, that there might be higher working in this church.

And again I pray you, brethren, to make more of spiritual work. The greatest thing which is ever done upon this earth is to convert a soul. It was of this that Christ spoke when He said, "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." Greater works than Christ? You, a believer, to do greater works than Christ? Try to do that great work—convert a soul, any soul, in your own family,—out of doors,—but a soul. How soon will the hour come when every other retrospect of life will fade into nothing compared with this, "I have brought a soul to God." And oh! what a grand meeting it will be between the bringer and the brought, when they stand together before the throne.

Thirdly, do not be afraid, do not think it wrong to wish, to pray, to hope, to strive, for a high place in

heaven. Do we not know, has not Christ told us, that there are degrees in that world of order, and ranges of angels, and archangels, and saints, ever ascending up to the very throne of God? And why has He told us this if it be not that we are to try for the highest? Though the entrance there is all of grace, the place there will be according to works. Else, why should a man once converted, that is, once sure of heaven, labor on, seeing, as far as heaven is concerned, his labor is all in vain, if there be no distinctions there?

Therefore, set your mark high in heaven. Would not you wish, when your Master comes, to have much to show Him, that you may prove how dearly you have loved Him? Do you love Him, and do you not wish to be close to Him? Away with that false humility which says, "Only let me be anywhere in heaven, give me the lowest place, if I only get in at all, it is enough." Go in boldly for the "right hand" and the "left." Aye, though you did begin very late, and though you are the weakest and the worst, who knows where you may be for ever when "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

But remember the terms of this high prize, and settle it this day well with yourself, whether you accept them—a cup and a baptism—a cup of many bitter drops, and a baptism into seas of sorrow.

# Humility:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, January 29th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,
*Incumbent.*

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in kingdom of heaven."—MATTHEW xviii. 4.

THE subject which I wish to bring before you this morning is the natural, I might almost say the necessary, sequel to that which I submitted to you last Sunday. Then, it was the duty of spiritual ambition;—I urged you to be great. Now, I wish to consider the way, the only way, by which that greatness can be reached—by stooping very low. For, as St. Augustine said long ago, "Humility is the first, humility is the second, humility is the third, and humility is the only step to greatness." So that my text of last Sunday, and my text of to-day, are two parts of one whole that can never be divided—"Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom,"—"Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

And in both verses, when the expression "the king-

dom" is used, you will remember that it means equally the Church in heaven and the Church on earth, for there is no difference. James and John certainly knew no distinction, neither did Christ draw any in His discourses. The Church, wherever it is, militant or triumphant, is "the kingdom of heaven," therefore, whoever is humblest, is morally, that is really, highest now, and will be the highest for ever and ever.

O brethren, we are all making great mistakes. The person, at this moment, in this earth, to whom an archangel is bowing down with the profoundest reverence, and who is the highest in the aristocracy of heaven, is one that you little think. If I had to search, I should find him, wherever he is, very active, but his name should very seldom come to the surface. Or perhaps, I should find him a deep sufferer, eloquent of Jesus, with his meek face and lanquid voice, to a privileged few; but scarcely known beyond the walls of that sick room. Or, I should find him very holy, but always in the shade, mean, very mean,—to fashionable eyes; but grand, perfectly grand, to the inhabitants of another world.

If you are a loyal subject to the kingdom of your Lord and Master, you will judge this—that he is the highest, whoever he be, who is nearest to your Sovereign, nearest to His heart, nearest to His throne, nearest to His image.

Of that nearness, we are poor judges, but this I know, Christ was always a Child. Did you ever notice it, that the apostles Peter and John, speaking—not alone of His infancy, nor of His early years—but altogether of His whole life and His glory, twice call

Him, "the Holy Child Jesus." The expression is as true as it is remarkable. For observe, that for thirty years—thirty years out of thirty-three,—whatever His occupation was, whether He acted as carpenter, or whether He was then studying the Bible, and preparing for His ministry—He was at Nazareth with His parents, wholly and only subject to them. That is all the record;—the child, characteristically, for thirty years, the child. And the other three years, beautiful traits of His reverential love to His mother gleam out, as for instance, when He paid such instant and profound obedience to her wish and suggestion at the marriage-feast, in His frequent returns back to the hóme at Nazareth, and His careful thought of her in His dying hours.

And to God, Christ was always the Child. He always knelt,—His eye was always upward,—He traced all His powers to His Father,—He spoke only the things which He declared He was told by His Father to speak,—He never did a work but He said that His Father had commissioned Him to do that work,—He was never anything but the Child, all His life on earth.

And as thus He was to man and to God the Child, so, necessarily, His spirit was always child-like. It was not that He was a martyr,—a martyr to a noble and unparalleled mission,—but it was that when He was a martyr, when He suffered and died, He did it all—if I may so say—in the beaten track, as if He had been a martyr just like other martyrs. He was insulted, and He was crucified, and He died, and He was buried, like a common man. That, that was the marvel of the condescension.

And He never put forth power for Himself. He

was always as one that had not power: He had it—infinite—but He never showed power for Himself.

Then, look at this. He chose His friends and companions among those whom all the great ones of this world would despise—men of low birth, provincial accent, shabby dress, altogether illiterate, and with them He walked through the streets, and about the public places, and He was not ashamed. That was very like a little child.

He never took nor saw offence. To persons who insulted Him, He was simply and generously kind. And where He was shedding the brightest light of truth and happiness—life, health, peace—He always stood back Himself into its shadow.

He loved to let Himself be ministered to, though He did not need it. And His own ministrations—oh! it was not the act, it was the manner of the act—the personal inconvenience, the long walk, such journeys, such thoughtfulness in little things, such tenderness—the servile garb, the menial office. And all this done—I do not say by the Lord of life and glory, that does not appear to me the point of the humiliation—but done by a Man—a Man among men—a Man with all the feelings of manhood—a refined Man, a Man capable of anything,

Unquestionably, brethren, the sympathies of Jesus are with the child-like, and the most child-like amongst us, this morning, is and will be the nearest to His image, and therefore to His heart, and therefore the nearest to His throne, for ever.

But now, how is humility to be attained? Is it a gift, a natural endowment which is bestowed on some?

I think there can be no doubt that some are

naturally more humble than others. But then there is a wide difference between natural and religious humility. Natural humility is rather a negative than a positive thing. Natural humility has no deep motive and no definite end; it is a relative virtue between man and man—only social. Christ is not in it, therefore God is not glorified.

And lower still than natural humility, there is a humility of word, of tone, and manner, which is a mere worldly ornament. It is put on and it is put off; it is unreal, it is quite compatible, and it is generally found with a great deal of pride; it fosters pride. I believe that nothing is more destructive of real humility than an affectation of it which the world generally praises, because it is part of the art of pleasing. And it does greatly please and charm till you find out its hollowness.

Notice, then, the expression, "Whosoever shall humble himself"—it is not "be humble"—"whosoever shall humble himself." It implies a process and then a victory—it recognises and pre-supposes a state of pride—it declares humility not a gift, but an attainment—not by nature, but by grace. And this humilty is as much better than a natural humility, as the grace of God is better than a man's own disposition, or as holiness is superior to innocence.

But now, how shall we cultivate it? I will not dwell on those methods which are common to the cultivation of every grace, such as these—union with Christ, by which union every grace of Jesus quietly and almost unconsciously flows into us, just as the sap of the stem immediately runs into a branch that is grafted;—nor contemplation of Christ, whereby we gradually grow into what we look at;—nor prayer;—nor honouring the Holy Spirit in His secret motions, whereby He draws and creates in a man any particu-

lar state,—but I pass on to one or two special ways, in which it seems to me we may best train ourselves in the lofty grace of a deep humility.

I have no hesitation what to put first—be sure that you are loved. We are all inclined to be proud to those whom we think do not like us, and we all can stoop to anything for those of whom we are fond, and of whom we believe they are fond of us. Therefore, the first root of humility is love. If you would be humble, you must not doubt your forgiveness. For it is no humility to put Christ high; but it is not humility unless Christ is honoured at the same moment, and by the same thought, that abases us.

Closely connected with this is another thing—realize yourself the object of great mercy. Take your sorrows as a proof of remembrance, and all your blessings as each a mark of an individual favour to you—for this will endear God to you. The sense of hardness generally shuts up the mind into itself, and stiffens the character. Therefore, grief is very often a very proud thing. A happy view of things, if it be a loving one, almost always does us good, and sends us lower. And oh! how many things we have to bind us.

Be more reverential in your religion, in your posture,—in your way of kneeling,—in your way of addressing God, and speaking about sacred things,—in your very voice and manner when you are engaged in what is holy,—because if once you can establish the relationship of a true humility to God, it will not be very difficult to go on to be humble to man. He who has once felt a child to His heavenly Father, will be ready to be a child to every one.

Always try to keep yourself a little child. Whatever age you are, throw yourself back into your own childhood, and be often realizing again what you used to think, and what you used to feel, when you were a very little child. It is of immense importance to keep the bloom of very

early life, "the dew of our birth;" and I earnestly advise young persons, who are beginning to enter into the world, to take great care that they do not brush off that dew. They are generally the loveliest Christians who preserve the most of their own childhood.

Deal frequently with your real self in some of the humbling parts of your own history. Who has not memories which, whenever he touches them, lay him in the dust? What one vast humiliation it is to look at any one motive of any one act we ever did in this world! Who has not, at this moment, some habit, if not a wrong one, yet a very foolish one, which is very mortifying when he thinks how he has tried to break it, and he cannot. Remember your besetting sin, and all the sins, that are coiled up in your besetting sin; do not cover them. Let it speak to you its own true degrading lessons.

And see where you now are, after years and years of profession and privilege. And what have you done, —what real result of life have you now to show? Do not compare yourself with any man, but do look often at the awful contrast between you and your Master.

Exercise inward discipline to meet the first budding of pride. "I have done this well;"—was the cleverness yours? was not it a gift? "I have been very charitable"—With whose money?—God's. "I am beautiful;"—did you make your own beauty?—then what is it worth? "I prayed a good prayer;"—then the thought that it is good has spoilt the prayer, and turned the prayer into sin. "I am better than that man;"—not if all his circumstances and all your circumstances were put together into the scales. "I have got on;"—then the very thought that you have got on shows that you have not got on, but that you have gone back in the most important of everything—a right estimate of yourself.

And do acts of humility. For act feeds feeling as

much as feeling nourishes act. For instance, if you have a difference with anyone, and you are quite sure that he is wrong and you are right, go and literally humble yourself to that person. You are treated contemptuously, and you are passed by in the street, and not noticed;—go and hold out your hand to that person, and say something very kind. You have a rival;—speak praisingly of your rival in the thing in which he rivals you. There is a fault that you have not yet confessed, and the person to whom you ought to confess it, is the most difficult person to whom you can confess a fault in the world;—go and do it.

It is astonishing how God will mark His approbation of acts like these, by increasing in you the humility which dictates them, and for the sake of which you have done them.

O brethren, you are too proud. With some it takes the form of vanity and worldly pride,—and perhaps, in still more, religious pride. It is your pride which stands between you and answers to prayer,—between you and faith,—between you and peace.

I observe God always empties before He fills, and He will always humble a person before He has used that person. He will not use you much till He has humbled you more. He who stoops the lowest leaps the highest; and the rule is universal, "Before honour is humility."

It is a great thing to have contact and intercourse with little children,—if it be only to be kept familiar with one of God's best lessons. A great deal is to be learnt from the study of a child. It is one reason why I could wish that more of you were Sunday School Teachers. It is not only the good you would do, but the good, the great good, you could get. And I take this opportunity of inviting you to this work for your own sake, as one of the best schools into which you can go for your own souls. Especially I ask the men of this congregation to do it, both because we especially need

help in our Boys' School, and because the work is so exceedingly useful for a young man. Go and be a little child among the children, and see if it be not a good step up. If you cannot work, at least you can sympathize, and you can give. I would wish you to give with the fulness of love; give something—"a cup of cold water"—to those who are the representatives of Christ now upon this earth, "and it will not lose its reward."

Our Infant School, to a very great extent, and our Sunday Schools entirely, depend upon your benevolence. And He who puts such honour upon childhood as to be Himself a child all His life, and to place children in the forefront of His ministry, and to make them the very mirror of His mission, and the exemplar of His Church, will scarcely fail to give back largely to those who give freely to them. And so, brethren, every step down will be another step upward on the ladder of your immortality.

# Refuge in Trouble:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, February 5th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."—ISAIAH XXVI. 20.

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IF it may be permitted to a minister, when in this place, to feel that there are any who have a first claim upon his thoughts, that first remembrance belongs to the afflicted. I cannot forget that it was an especial command to God's servants, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people;" nor that our blessed Master, when He stood in the midst of those wicked cities, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, had His first thoughts for the unhappy ones, "Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

And few are aware how large, in the midst of every congregation, is the class of those who are feeling, according to the solemn image of my text, that "the indignation" of the Lord is passing over them. Within the little span of a few short weeks, how quickly does the tide of the sorrows of domestic life,—or of the alarms of the political world,—gather and roll on in one dark thick wave. And then that solemn word

that presses heavy upon the mind—"indignation." Is it "indignation?" Do I deserve "indignation?"

To different minds, indeed, things come under very different aspects. There are some, who, reading in mighty events the harbingers of mightier ones than are just below the horizon,—and seeing the finger of God already in the heavens, trace the time of the end even now at the beginning,—and look with eager and anxious gaze till the Lord shall come to make a quick work upon the earth.

Others, though they dare not tread the maze of prophecy, wonder at the strange things which are falling upon the earth, and picture, not without fear, what the end of all these things will be.

Others, in tenderer anguish, unable to take that wider field,—wounded and bereft where their hearts were fondest,—are sitting down in their lone and desolate places, too wrapped in their nearer sorrow to heed the storm that is raging without.

While many are wrestling along, day by day, in one continual conflict with their bitter sins,—with heavy clouds threatening to break on their heads,—scarcely venturing to look up for very fear,—and brooding within themselves whether the Lord will ever remove that heavy load, and lift up again the light of His countenance, and send them on their road with songs to Zion.

Such is the attitude of O how many at this moment, in this our world. And why—why this outpoured "indignation?" My text answers. It is certain that it is God's rule never to allow His people to walk wide, to wander far, from themselves and from Him. You, brethren, I speak to the Church, you are not meant for the glare of the dazzling world, and as surely as you are found in your bold, confident, independent courses, there will meet you something to force you back into your own proper element,—into your retirements and your humiliations.

We have seen it on the wider field of the Church's history—how, never has the Church emerged from obscurity to get out into the cycle of fashion, or human favour, but invariably there has sprung up a fiery trial to test, to purify, to drive the Church back again into her low, proper place of content.

And as it has been with the Church Catholic, so it fares with her individual members. Whenever God sees any one of His children straying out too much into the beaten paths,—living as others live,—then He sends some forcible messenger to make them come back. Just as a good shepherd draws the hurdles closely round his sheep in the hour of danger, that he may have them safer, nearer, and dearer to him, so Christ does with you. Therefore it is that the sky gathers storms, and foundations are shaken, and heavy afflictions fall, and old establishments are uprooted, and spiritual distresses come thick about us—that every one may hear a voice, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

In this invitation, I wish you to notice that which marks so many of God's addresses, that while the appeal is common to all, "Come, my people," the direction is minute, and particular to the individual, "Enter thou."

The man who thus accepts commands, seeing them in their universality, but applying them in their individuality, is the man who best catches the intention of God. Even as it was in the mind of Jesus, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee."

Observe, then, what are the special duties—in other words, what are the special comforts—for duties are comforts, and comforts are duties—duties and comforts are identical words—what are the duties of the comforts, and the comforts of the duties, which belong

to those servants of God who, either at this moment outwardly in national affairs, or inwardly in their little experiences, are finding cause to say that they have fallen on dark and evil days, such as came on Hezekiah, king of Judah, in the days of Isaiah the prophet.

Now the duty or the comfort is threefold. It is, first, a sense of personal security; next, the exercises of retirement; next, the privileges of expectation.

First, I place a sense of a man's own personal safety as the highest duty and comfort of every believer in seasons of affliction. For this seems to me to be what lies in the text, for plainly the words are words of imagery—"Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee." What "doors?" what "chambers?" The "chamber" of the inner sanctuary of God's secret love—and the "door," the Lord Jesus Christ; the "chamber," inviolable as the Holy of holies—the "door," which shuts him in, and shuts all evil out, stronger than adamant. And then, as the dove that folded itself in the ark,—or as the sparrow that made her nest in the Lord's house,—or as the believing Israelite that sat down that memorable night within the blood-stained door at his paschal feast,—or as the affrighted manslayer now within the gates of the asylum city,—so is every sinner safe who has gone to that "chamber," and "shut that door."

And from the moment that he has run into that refuge to hide himself in Christ, look where he is. Between all the wrath of God and himself, there is Christ—no shaft of evil can touch him till it has gone through his Saviour. Can God condemn him?—can God condemn His Son?—can God unfinish a finished work? No, that man is garrisoned in all the attributes of the unchangeable Jehovah, and "his life is hid with Christ in God." Are wicked things said against him? "Thou wilt hide me secretly in thy pavilion from the strife of tongues." Are the flames of trial near? God, greater than the flames, is

Himself "a wall of fire" about His child. Are the anger and the wrath of cruel men let loose? "The wrath of men shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath,"—whatever will not praise thee, that shall not be,—"the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

It is this firm confidence of his own personal interest in Christ that I believe to be so essentially necessary at this moment—important always, but how essential when trouble is near,—to realize that God loves you, —that your sins are forgiven,—that whatever these judgments may be to others, at least to you they carry no anger,—that rather they are bearing you on to an expected end, and an appointed rest,—and that at the other side of these troubled waters there is a quiet shore.

That is what the mind needs at such a time. And oh, brethren, how little will all that can come from without—the agitations of nations,—the determination of Satan,—the struggle of life—how little will they be to one who knows all the safety, and all the blessings, and all the peace, and all the dignity, of such a refuge.

Therefore, is it God's will for me to meet you this morning, and to ask you, my dear brethren, before the time of the great water-floods, "Are you safe? is it all right between your soul and God? have you peace? could you run in a moment into that love? the name of Jesus, is it a sweet sanctuary to you?"

Now, whoever has made Christ his sanctuary will be a man of hushed spirit. To him secret communion is a dear thing, and retirement is his familiar place. He will be a man who likes to draw the curtains about him, and to go into solitude with God,—to listen for still small voices,—and he will often hear the word, and hear it welcomingly, "Come, enter thou into thy chambers."

Is there not a need, brethren, that I should press this upon you? Senators are going to their parliaments, and great men are going to their conferences—

where shall we go? Am I mistaken, when I think that it is one of the sad features of the Church that the closet hours are becoming very few with many of us? Is not religion more out-of-doors? The very richness of our privileges, the very frequency of our religious services,—blessed as they are,—may they not be indeed a snare, if they infringe upon the private exercises of every man's own room? True, it is a blessed thing to have daily services and very frequent communion. But the command to daily services or a frequent communion is not like this—"Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." What is the measure of a man's life? The time he can spend, and the time he does spend, and the time he likes to spend, alone with his God. That is life—to go up, and be alone, and have a sweet dialogue with Christ—to have so much to say that the time is too short—too short to receive instruction—to find the reading of our Bible wearisome—to have an unseen presence there—to feel Christ close—to sit still, and as from a high tower, to look out on this world's bitter field—to give faith wings to soar away far beyond the site of suffering, or the noise of this world's cruel strife. That is what makes a christian, and that is security, —when you can see what an independent life that man is carrying out who can at all times command the delight of communion. And it is plain how fresh that soul will keep which is always drawing out of that secret fountain, and who can say how quiet the feeling is, when there is nothing but God seen all around, and how holy that sorrow grows, which has been touched with that mystic converse with the Man of sorrows.

Therefore, I venture to press it upon you, brethren, —Be more in your own room, and have more silent, secret communications with God. We want a hidden life. Go, and when you are quite alone, feel alone

with God—place yourself, as you cannot place yourself even in church; cast yourself down bodily and spiritually into the very dust. Accept your burden, and then roll it upon Jesus. Then be sure you are safe. Are not you a child, sealed for ever? Lie on the bosom—nothing can divide you—He is yours, you are His for ever and ever. You are like the apple of His eye. "What shall separate you from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

Then, O inhabitant of the rock, then stand at your height, on tiptoe, in your purer atmosphere, and look out. We do not know how long the vials of wrath may be continued to be poured out upon the unhappy countries—nor can we say what snare may be coming on the whole world. But for you, I know that it is only for a little while, "till the indignation be overpast."

What is it in the scales of eternity. Surely you need not think of "indignation." "Indignation," where is it? It sheathed itself, it buried itself, it lost itself eighteen hundred years ago in the side of Jesus, in those precious wounds. Where is anger? It is not. Where is room for fear when all is love? Already, by these tokens, the dawn is breaking. The morning star may rise in clouds, but it is the morning star. This groaning creation is only travailing now for the manifestation of the sons of God, and very soon the word will be, "Come out, ye prisoners of hope." And then, where will be fear, or death, or anger, or weeping, or sorrow, in that sweet hour when the thunder-cloud will have rolled by, and such a voice from heaven will be heard, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

# The Largeness of Salvation:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Evening, February 12th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"—JOHN i. 29.

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As I read these words, it is pleasant to think how they are echoed everywhere. All the Bible rings to this one note,—nature, with her silent anthems, sings to it,—every soul, just gathered into the fold, swells the chorus, and sends forth his voice again to a lingering world. Thousands, and tens of thousands of saints, safe in their high places, are giving their undying record to Him who has "washed them in His blood, and made them to be kings and priests" for ever; and as they gaze on Him in His beauty, this is their unending theme, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

I would wish to draw to these words the attention of any man, who, looking on Christ as a mere man, however holy, considers that He lived to be the example of a good life, and that He died to teach men how to die. Did that Lamb die to be a pattern to us of gentle death? Was that the reason why, year by

year, and day by day, God commanded the Jewish priests to offer the unoffending victim? And yet, to that conclusion, so absurd,—that all the Jewish sacrifices were intended to be examples of a good death,—that man must come, or else he must let his whole system fall to the ground before these simple words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

But I do feel that it was very kind teaching which compared the Saviour to the gentlest, and the meekest, and the most inoffensive of creatures. I know what it is, when the consciousness of guilt and of well-deserved punishment is lying heavy upon the mind, to feel afraid almost even to pray, lest by attracting God's special notice we should bring down, by our prayer, some instant judgment. I know what it is to sit and let our fears make fancies of a God such as we have a right to expect Him to be—a God turning His back upon us in displeasure, or breaking out upon us in the fierceness of His wrath. And therefore it is that God has been pleased to use this winning metaphor, to stop all our fears and win all our confidences, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

But, while the reference is to the sacrificial lamb generally, it is more particular to that lamb slain once a year in the commemoration of the exodus of the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. You remember the night. You remember how it set in upon Egypt in all its solemn terror,—how the shriek of death broke out at the midnight hour over the whole face of that devoted country, when "from the first-born of Pharoah that sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, there was not a house in

which there was not one dead,"—when all faces gathered blackness, and parent, rushing forth for comfort, met parent steeped in equal sorrow, as the one great wave of pitiless death rolled darkly over the land. And you remember how, in that eventful night, in the very centre of the desolation, there was peace, and joy, and liberty, and life, in those homes where the blood of the paschal sacrifice—that sacrifice set apart long before, offered in the midst of the great congregation, and then brought home to each man's dwelling—lay sprinkled upon the door,—how the destroying angel recognized the emblem of the covenant, sheathed his sword, and passed on.

Is that, brethren, is that a mere history of the past? Is that night a thing which belongs to bygone ages? Or is it a type—does it tell of another night when another message to destroy shall go forth from the Almighty, when there shall be a cry of anguish again heard in this world, from the sabbath-breakers, the despisers, the unclean, the hypocrites, the worldly-minded, the profane?

And I ask you to-night—Are you prepared? If that night should come, are you prepared? Is the blood on the door, upon that heart which is the going in and the coming out of every man, a man's door? Is the atoning sacrifice laid on every avenue?

O behold Him, behold Him, where He lay, that Lamb of God, on His Father's bosom, from all eternity, in all the happiness of heaven,—and "though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich."

Behold Him there, in that eternity, the Lamb slain in the counsels of God before the foundations of the world were laid.

Behold Him, behold Him, coming down to this inhospitable world, rejected, scorned, and then in the midst of assembled multitudes, between earth and heaven,—where men were scoffing, and scribes were jeering, and angels were wondering, that Lamb of God —lifted up, a ransom, a ransom in the equipoise of the scales of God's perfect justice, to outweigh the sins of the whole world.

Behold Him, behold Him, the water and the blood flowing from those precious wounds—there to cleanse your soul, and wash it clean from every stain. Is it done? Then, what if hell itself come on, what if thousands and tens of thousands of sins cry behind you for vengeance? The blood is on the door; you can bid that messenger of wrath pass by and look not on your poor death-deserving soul, but on that "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is a magnificent thing—the largeness of salvation. It does not say the "sins" of the world, but the "sin." Three times, indeed, in our church service the expression is quoted, and each time much of its force and beauty is lost, by the little circumstance that the word is put into the plural number. Just as when you sing our evening hymn, and diminish the beauty of the hymn when you say—

> "Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
> The *ills* that I this day have done."

It is far finer in the singular—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sin* of the world!"

It is as if God rolled together the iniquities of the whole world into one great mountain,—and then the great Samson of our salvation took up that mountain upon His shoulders. It pressed with a tremendous weight; the Father's wrath was in it,—His spirit was

crushed to the very dust,—His sweat was drops of blood,—the cry of agony burst forth,—but He bore the mountain away from you, and He buried it in the fathomless waters of an eternal oblivion.

There are some of you who know what the burden of sin is. You know what it is to go to bed at night, feeling the weight of the remembrance of sin. Multiply that sin into all the sins you do in all your life: then take that total, and multiply it with all the inhabitants that have ever walked this earth, or shall walk it to the end of time,—then multiply that amount again into eternities, and you are approaching what it was, and what it means, when we say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

It is like as when the mists of the dark morning gather themselves into a black thunder cloud, and the breath of God's Spirit comes and wafts it away to some distant land, where it vents itself scatheless, and you are saved.

And whose, brethren, whose are the sins which are borne away? "The world's." Shall I be told that Jesus died for a particular few, while that "world" is on the page of the scripture? Shall I be restricted from flinging the offers of free salvation as wide as the whole habitable globe, if Jesus took away "the sin of the world?" I believe it—for God says it—I believe that God has His own elect, known to Him from all eternity, and I believe that only those elect will be saved, and I believe that in His own good time each one of those elect will be brought out and saved. But so long as this verse is in God's word,—so long as I find it repeated with still greater emphasis in the second chapter of the first epistle of St. John,—and

while ten thousand passages proclaim the same, never may I stint and narrow down the grace of God, so as not to hold out and preach to you, in all its illimitable breadth, universal redemption.

I am not careful to reconcile what God is pleased to leave unreconciled; but we would rather confess our ignorance, and lay ourselves in the dust, and not pry too far into secret things, than to abate one iota of this grand and majestic declaration of God's love, so God-like in its unbounded ranges, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

But do you ask, brethren, how you may know whether your sins are in that mountain,—whether from you Christ has borne them away? I know one safe warrant. If the condemnation of the sin is gone absolutely, the power, the love, and the presence of the sin, are going gradually. For observe, He takes away not the condemnation of sin—though that would be great—but it is greater, "He taketh away the sin of the world."

Here, then, I feel the strength of my privilege, as the minister of Christ to you.

I go to-night to any unhappy, sorrowing one, whose countenance is sad for very sin and trouble, without asking any question, and I say to that unhappy heart, —"I know not what your heart's grief may be, but this I know, God has provided the remedy, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!'"

Or I may pass down into the haunts of infamy and vice, and I may meet there a being that has never learnt to blush at her own vileness, who brazens out with awful effrontery her reckless profligacy, and lifts up her head in bold rebellion against the God who

created her, and the Saviour who died for her. A long course of sin may have seared the poor wretch's conscience, and she is cased in Satan's iron, the time is past when any conviction has visited her soul,—and yet, to that poor abandoned one, I am justified, nay I am commanded, to fling wide my gospel and to say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Or I may cross the wide waters of the ocean which divide us, and I may stand out on the shore of some savage island, where the foot of missionary or of Christian man has never trod, and as the untaught heathen, who never bow down but to their blocks, gather around me, I may proclaim that name of Jesus, I say it as simply and as freely as I say it to the most literate and the most refined of Christian congregations, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Between this great salvation and your soul, there must be one little deed,—it is a very little one, it is the simplest possible, made so simple that all the glory may be to God—it is a look, a look, a look of the mind, a trusting, penitential, loving glance, even a sincere thought. And then it will be like Peter of old—you, looking to Jesus, find Jesus looking to you. His look on you, all pardon, peace, love; and that reflected look to Him trust, gratitude, service. And the work is done. You have "beheld the Lamb of God," and He "takes away the sin of the world."

And why do I wish to dwell on this so much? Because I am sure that it is the secret of three things.

It is the secret of all holiness. I do not believe in any holiness that springs from fear. I do not believe in any holiness that is not rooted in peace. And I

know that when once you have looked to Jesus, your soul is at peace, and that peace will be the parent of love, and that love will beget holiness.

And I know that it is the secret of happiness. For what is happiness? The rest of desire. And do you think that you will ever find rest away from Jesus? Have you found it? You have tried many things, but have you found rest? Never, never will you rest till you rest in "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

And so God will be glorified,—that end of ends. There are series of ends, but this is the highest—the glory of God. For the glory of God you were created and redeemed, and when that end is attained, then you are ripe for heaven.

And when you "behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," these are the results: —your soul is at peace,—Jesus "sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied,"—the angels sing over your penitential joy,—and glory goes up to God in heaven.

# The Gentiles' Light and Israel's Glory:

## A SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, February 19th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."—LUKE ii. 32.

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THE song of Simeon was very beautiful in its arrangement:—first, the believer's personal appropriation of a promise, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for *mine eyes* have seen thy salvation;"—next, the expansion of a Christian's Catholic spirit, "A light to lighten the Gentiles,"—and then the holy patriotism of a Jewish heart, "And the glory of thy people Israel." All this—his own salvation,—the conversion of the world,—the final majesty of the Jews,—Simeon's faith enabled him to see in the little infant Jesus which he held in his arms. And we scarcely know which to admire most—the comprehensiveness of the conception, or the order of the thoughts.

Before our eyes, there lies now, outspread in all its fulness, the finished work of that infant Saviour, developed into the Lord of life and glory. And what have we to do but to read there still with Simeon's

confidence, and in Simeon's sequence—first, each one for himself, his own interest in Christ's saving work,—then the duty and the hope of the evangelization of the whole world,—and then the predicted consummation of Israel's glory, in the acknowledgment and reception of the same Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, in that grand coming Jewish state which will usher in the new heavens and the new earth.

Let me press upon you again—that in no other order can these thoughts be ever in their true place in a man's mind. There must be first the individuality of a personal gospel, such as can enable you to feel and say, "Mine eyes," "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Without this, there can be no superstructure built. You can only value for another what you have previously found precious for yourself. And that once secured, then there are two essential consequences—large expansiveness of desire, prayer, efforts, love, which shall leap out after the salvation of everybody you know, of all your family, of every living man, "to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;"—and then, in the mind, an intelligent interpretation of the Scriptures concerning the Jewish people, as that point which is at once the centre from which all God's plans originally sprung, and the focus to which all God's plans upon this earth are finally gathering. For in that expansiveness, combined with that distinctiveness, I believe that we are best following the mind of the Holy Ghost,—"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

And here the question will naturally come, What is the distinction, if any, between Christ as "the light of the Gentiles?" and Christ as "the glory of Israel?" Is it only a difference of degree? Light, growing into

deeper intensity and glow, becomes glory. So, Christ illuminates, indeed, all people, but not with that lustre with which He will one day encircle Jerusalem. And is it, therefore, "A *light to lighten* the Gentiles, and the *glory* of thy people Israel?"

Or, is there a distinction in the thing itself? We have warrant to believe, that before the end of this dispensation, "the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea," and that in that way, the gospel will be a witness to all nations. But we have no scriptural authority whatever to say, that under the present dispensation, all the inhabitants of those nations will undergo real conversion of heart. Every statement of Scripture concerning the Second Advent, pre-supposes and involves the contrary. But at some time or other—I am not careful now to distinguish when—we have certain ground to expect that the whole Jewish nation, in its integrity, without exception, will be, every one of them, the Lord's true people. Now universal diffusion of knowledge, is "light;" the inner work of grace in the reflection of God in the heart, is "glory." And do we so arrive at it—"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel?"

Or, once more. The actual presence of the Lord in beauty and power, is glory. Where shall that presence be at the last? At Jerusalem. Very great will be the irradiation of the whole earth, when that glory is revealed on Zion. But still, it will be only the distant beam of a full meridian sun, which is blazing at Palestine,—"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

As Gentiles, then, we first take our subject, and we ask, What is our proper privilege and portion? And we have the answer,—"Light,"—Christ "a light." Of those simple words no one in this church will know

the power who has never felt the narrowing in of a moral darkness in his mind. But ask the man who has ever known a season of deep sorrow which shrouded all his earthly prospects, and left nothing before him but a thick night over the future, and one rayless expanse. Or go to the man who has found himself ever shut up in a most inextricable perplexity in the labyrinth of life, what path he should take for duty or for safety? Or still more, hear the soul which under the conscious hiding of God's countenance has felt the shadows of conscience deepen over his spirit into the blackness of despair. And those are the men who will understand the words, Christ "a light."

And what is "light?" The apostle St. Paul replied, "Whatever doth make manifest is light." What does Christ make manifest?

It would be exceedingly difficult to calculate what have been the indirect effects of the gospel of Christ in our world. I believe that a right state of heart is so essential to the highest actings of the mind, or, in other words, that the grace of God in the soul is so necessary to the development of the understanding, that intellectually, Christ has been in the most literal sense, the world's "light." And if it be answered that the highest state of art and science has been reached by nations who yet did not know Christ—I answer, that that state of art and science was attended with so much moral degradation,—with so much sheer ignorance respecting the chief concerns of man,—with so much grossness of credulity, superstition, and idolatry,—that we must hesitate, notwithstanding all its literature and all its tastes, to call it "light." And certain it is, that whenever the attempt has been made to civilize any nation before that nation is evangelized, the enterprise has failed. Whereas, there is not a country in the whole world which has been brought under the power of the gospel of Christ, but invariably, by a necessary law of cause and effect, civilization has sprung up in its steps, and kept pace with its

increase. Therefore Christ is "light" to the whole world.

But the prophecy has been verified, again, in a much higher sense than this. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one only manifestation of the mind of the Father. What utter confusion was in the conceptions of the whole world respecting God. See them always, in the heathen world, making a god out of each single one of God's attributes, simply because they had no clue to harmonize those apparently conflicting attributes into one. Or see the natural, untaught workings of every mind, how they cannot reconcile infinite justice with infinite love. One, seeing nothing but justice,—there is no escape from despair. And another, beholding only love, lapses into faintness, or rushes into presumption. But Christ brings all into consistency and unity. He shows God "just and the justifier,"—just, infinitely just, in punishing the substitute, at the very moment when He stands forth absolutely love in pardoning the sinner. O for more of those rays of light, to make us know the Father!

And as that "light" exhibits the mind of God, see next how it acts upon the human soul. You have seen the sun-light, in the early days of spring, brooding over some dry and barren piece of earth on the hill-side,—how it seeks out its latent vitality, and makes it spring forth into vegetable life, till it covers the soil with its mantling verdure. Just so, the rays from the Sun of Righteousness, when they find their way down into a poor sinner's heart, summon out the energies of a new existence. The blade of feeling, the bud of resolution, the blossom of principle, the flower of holiness, the fruit of usefulness, follow in their season, and the dry heart has become like the very garden of the Lord.

And as from the mountains of hope, in the newly-awakened soul, the warm radiance of divine love flows down into the valley of its Achor, the whole soul keeps high festival, like the Jews of old, with "light, and gladness, and joy, and honour," with "joy and

gladness, a feast, and a good day;" and it learns, in the true evangelical sense, to sing, "Light is sown for the righteous,"—Christ is sown for the justified,—"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

And in the difficult mazes of life it is the same "light" which shows the path. The believer finds the comfort of that too-often forgotten name of Christ—"the Counsellor"—as the light falls on some word of the Bible, and makes it stand out clear as in a sunbeam, —or a still small voice speaks in the silence of the waiting heart, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And the Christian is taught as he walks with firm step his now clear road, what that means—"He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

And that first ray of dawn, when it streams in upon some poor weary penitent, who has been keeping watch all the night long in his guilty terror, oh! who shall say what is the promise and what is the conception of that breaking day of holiness and peace? And so it goes on—clearer and clearer manifestations of God's love, brighter and brighter beams of heaven, follow each on the other in never-ending succession—a shining path "which shineth more and more to the perfect day," because He is "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

But I turn to Israel's "glory." Can I write that word? Is He not their shame? And is it not branded upon their very brow, with an indelible disgrace, that they have "crucified the Lord of life and glory?" How righteous the retribution! How awful the stamp of dishonour! They who could see "no beauty in Him that they should desire Him,"—who now desires them? The mockers are the mocked; and they who wagged their heads, and told their jests, are themselves now the proverb and the byeword. They who would not let the Gentiles come in, are themselves gone out among all nations. They denied His lineage,

and they can no longer trace any one of them his own. Lest they should lose their place and nation, they slew Him, and many days they have abode without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Nevertheless, from age to age, there have never been wanting those of Abraham's seed—"a remnant according to the election of grace,"—who have "looked on Him whom they have pierced, and mourned." Those gathered ones, in their generation, guarantee the promise; they herald the coming in of the glory; they give earnest of that time, doubtless near,—perhaps to be evolved of the very events which are now passing around us,—when Abraham's outcasts, and Judah's dispersed ones, shall all come back—come back first in their unconverted state, by a political restoration, to their own country,—then to trials and afflictions commensurate with the deed which their fathers perpetrated,—then to majesty unprecedented upon this earth, when, the subjects of the visible King of kings and Lord of lords, they shall hold high court, and be supreme among the nations of the world, and that infant Jesus, in Simeon's arms, shall be "the glory of His people Israel" when He "reigns in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously."

Time would fail me even to read to you the magnificent and gorgeous descriptions which the prophets draw of Jerusalem's approaching splendour. Let one passage suffice,—"I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but

thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning, shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in His time."

"Thy God thy glory,"—O brethren, what words!—"Thy God thy glory." Of what nation, of what nation on the face of the whole earth, at this moment, could it be written—"Thy God thy glory." Not of England, with her commerce, and her armies, and her pleasures, and her government, and her church; but of Jerusalem,—not now, but soon—when "holiness shall be on the bells of the horses," when from end to end shall be inscribed, "Jehovah Shammah," "The Lord is there,"—"Thy God thy glory."

But remember, whenever Jesus becomes the glory of anything, by a beautiful reciprocity that thing becomes the glory of Jesus. Therefore the Jews are the glory of Jesus, and that which is glorious to Christ should be precious to you. Here I fill up my argument. Let it be very dear to you, to-day, by prayer, and love, and alms, to do go good and to be kind to those who are so very dear to God. And show that you are Gentiles "lightened by the light," because you hasten in "the glory of His people Israel."

# Christ the Evangelist:

## THE FIRST LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, February 26th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek."—ISAIAH lxi. 1.

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YOU are probably aware that the Sundays in Lent are not part of Lent. There are forty days in Lent, exclusive of the Sundays. Sundays in our Church are always feasts. You could not properly have a fast on a Sunday. Therefore, whatever may be your sad feelings and your Lenten habits in the week, your Sunday, at this season, should be all happy. And your minister, in the selection of the subjects of his sermons, should remember this. He should not preach penitential sermons because it is Lent, seeing that the Sundays are insulated. He will be in more real keeping with the Church's system, and the Church's rule, if, assuming that you are in the intervals exercising self-denial, and mortification, and penitence, he meets you, when you come up here, Sunday by Sunday, with words of comfort and encouragement, —telling you of Christ, and pardon, and peace, and heaven,—that spreading for you a table by the way,

when you are weary, and exhausted, and unhappy, on account of the sins with which you have been dealing, he may send you back strengthened to your searchings and your conflicts.

It is on this ground that I have chosen for our consideration in the six Sundays till Easter, the three first verses of the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. Let me read them to you first in their completeness: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." In which, as you will observe, we have, beautifully prepared and accurately laid out to our hands, six portraits of our blessed Lord:—Christ the Evangelist, —Christ the Good Physician,—Christ the Liberator,— Christ the Revealer,—Christ the Jubilee of His Church,—and Christ the Comforter.

To-day we shall have to do with Christ the Evangelist:—"The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek."

For we have the best evidence that it is Christ of whom the prophet speaks, since the whole passage is endeared to us, and to a great extent identified, by the fact that our Lord Himself chose it for the text of His own first sermon, which He preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, on His return, after His baptism and temptation, to His own city.

And in this circumstance, I would ask you to note

two things,—one, that Christ's sermon on this text immediately succeeded His own Lenten discipline,—and the other, that it is the holiest and the most affecting which could ever be brought into a pulpit,—since it is the only text of which we are sure that Christ Himself used it there.

But who am I that I should dare to touch what He has hallowed, and to venture poor sinful thoughts of mine in the same track in which He went, when all who heard Him bare witness and "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth?" The more do you pray for me,—that He will pardon, and wash, and raise, my thoughts and words. For here is my strength and my comfort, that taking His text, I may the rather hope for His presence and His sympathy, and at last be the better able to cast, and merge, and lose all that is mine in all that is His.

It was in reference to His late baptism, and to the descent of the Holy Ghost, and to the accompanying testimony from heaven, that Jesus, taking His text from this chapter, which was probably one of the lessons for the day, read, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me;"—and then He adds the first intention of His ministry—"to preach good tidings unto the meek." His manhood had just received the holy chrism for that end, and if *He* needed the unction, and waited to speak until that Holy Ghost had come upon Him, O then, what is all human preaching unless it hath the oil and the witness of the Holy Ghost? But has the Lord indeed "anointed me" to take up His message, and to preach, in His name, "good tidings?"—and, if I doubt it, why am I here?—then let me do it, as one whom He hath ordained, with holiness and fervour, and with an earnest faithfulness for the souls committed to my care.

Christ was His own evangelist. Prophets had evangelized,—the angels evangelized to Zechariah, to Mary on the hills of Bethlehem. Simeon, and Anna, and John the Baptist evangelized. And many preachers and sacred writers have evangelized since Pentecost. And all nature has her evangelic tongue to hearts that are truly set to its music. But all are through Him, and by Him, and for Him,—all representing Him. To Him it belongs of right, to all else by deputy. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek."

And, indeed, brethren, whatever else may be preached,—be it in the eloquence of nature, or be it by human reasoning, underlying all other language, —Christ must Himself, by His own inward voice, preach the glad tidings to your heart, or it will never be glad tidings to you.

You will observe a little difference in the words as we have them in the text, and as they stand in our Lord's sermon in the fourth of Luke. He, quoting from the Septuagint, says, "To preach the Gospel to the poor;" Isaiah has it, "To the meek." But the change, if any, is very small indeed. Meekness is properly a gentle spirit, which either does not feel, or very quickly forgets, an injury. And "the poor," in the Bible, mean sometimes the destitute, but often in a spiritual sense, the soft and lowly-hearted. Now, remember, all anger is pride; meekness, therefore, the opposite to anger, is nearly identical with humility. So that "the meek" and "the poor" are words so very little apart, that they are almost convertible terms.

Only take care that you punctuate the sentence aright. It is not, "The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings, unto the meek," as though He addressed

only "the meek," and so made exclusive teaching. But, "The Lord hath anointed me to preach, good tidings to the meek." He speaks to all men, and tells all men that they have only to become "meek," and the "good tidings" are theirs. And thus the promise at once intimately connects itself with Lent,—for the very purpose of Lent is to cultivate a sense of poverty,—a subdued spirit,—a heart in the dust; it is the identical frame of mind to which the "tidings" of the gospel are "good;" so that thus you become the subjects of the ministry of the great Evangelist, "He hath anointed Me to preach—good tidings to the meek."

And now I come to the main point—What are the "good tidings" which Jesus preaches? And to determine the answer to that great question, we must, of course, look to the preaching of Jesus Himself when He was upon the earth. What was it?

I know no better way you can take to judge of this than to put together, in their order, the great occasions of His preaching. And you might arrange them thus:—the sermon on the mount, of which the "good tidings" were to show the introduction of the dispensation of love,—access to a prayer-hearing God,—a freedom from all anxiety and care, in consequence of God's wonderful provision for our bodily wants. Then, the conversation with Nicodemus, of which the "good tidings" were, the spiritual entrance into the kingdom, and the great doctrine of salvation by faith, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then, the conversation with the woman at the well, of which the "good tidings" were to set Him forth as at once the One who knows and satisfies the most inmost thoughts of every human heart. Then comes the address at Bethesda, with its "good

tidings" to declare the happy truth that it is a man, "the Man Christ Jesus," who shall both raise us up and judge us at the last day. Then the deep and mysterious application of the miracle of the loaves, which exhibits Christ as the very bread and life of His people. And so we pass on to all those teachings of the nature and the character of the kingdom of God, with their beautiful similitudes, all showing forth the freeness of the offer,—the wideness of the compass,—the certainty of the increase,—the perfection of the union; till we read those exquisite whispers of the last supper, with all their depth and intensity of promise and love,—promise of an eternal presence,—of an unbroken peace,—of One that shall be better than Himself coming,—and of a meeting together again for ever and ever,—and love, love even to absolute oneness,—love to the end,—love fond and true, love faithful unto death. And we would not leave it till we hear it pausing just before His ascension, and sending forth the good news to the utmost bounds of our earth, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

I think many of you must have felt "the good tidings" of the gospel are not often either preached or accepted in a thousandth part of their goodness. Ministers seem to be afraid to propose any thing so very free; and to most persons, when it is proposed, it appears really too good to be true. There is much gospel which is so ungospel-like that it is no gospel at all.

Now, "good tidings," to be "good," must first be "tidings" of happy things,—then the happy things must be free gifts,—then the offer of the free gifts must be universal,—and then the possession of the free gift must be immediate,—all which the gospel literally is.

Therefore, taking these four characteristics, in the name of my great Master, as though He were preaching here, as I believe He would preach if He were here, — I stand before you this day to declare my message. And it is this—God loves you,—. He has loved you from all eternity, and He has accepted, at Christ's hands, the payment of all your debt. Your sins are forgiven, they are buried, and cast into the depth of the sea, and they will never rise up again. And Jesus is now gone to heaven to pray for you, and to prepare a place for you till you come. And in answer to that prayer, it is the Holy Ghost which is now striving with your heart. And as that work in your heart is all of grace, and God begins it, so it is sure to go on, and He will not leave it, till it is finished, For He has undertaken for you in everything,—for time and for eternity, and He will "never leave you, nor forsake you." And He will soon be here; and when He comes, then all sin and sorrow will flee away,—He will place you at His right hand, and He will pronounce over you His own benediction, ".Come, ye blessed of my Father." And you will be joined again to those who have gone before you, and you will be with Him, and you will be holy, and you will be happy, and you will be like Him for ever and ever,

And to all this, and much more than I have time to say, there is no condition whatsoever,—excepting that which is no condition, that you take it; in other words, "Only believe." Then, it is all yours—no indemnity for you to pay for that peace,—no sacrifice of your making,—it is all done, it is peace. "He made it in His high places," and in His own boundless generosity. It is all a fact,—it was done eighteen hundred years ago,—and nothing can be added to it.

Simply and only, as nothing but a poor miserable sinner, who cannot contribute one iota, because you are an utter bankrupt, take it, and it is done.

And it is to you. No one is excluded,—no one is excepted. No dye of sin,—no length of sin,—no horror of sin,—shuts you from it. It is to all sinners of every class. He died "for the sins of the whole world," and the blood of His Son "cleanseth us from all sin." It is for you.

And it is now. Do not say, "I must be holier;" do not say, "I must give proof of sincerity;" do not say, "I must have more faith;" do not say, "I must be in a better state." Take care, take care of that subtle device of Satan to stop the whole work by placing sanctification before justification. Thank God! it is a part, and a very large part, of the good news, that if you accept your pardon, you will be sure afterwards to grow a better man. A motive,—the only effectual motive, will be implanted,—the real spring will be put in, and you will love God because you are pardoned—you cannot help but try and please and be like Him you love. But all you have to do now is to close with the offer. Do not ask any questions. Cast yourself broadly upon the great truth,

"Just as you are, without one plea,"

realize that you are loved—feel forgiven.

This is all very unlike man. But does not it put God in His proper place? Is not it Father-like? Is not it God-like? And all this I say to you,—to every one of you,—without stint or shadow,—without let or hindrance,—an unbroken and shoreless ocean of pure, unfathomable love.

It would be a glorious thing if it fell upon our ears, this day, that a mighty king, all dominant, with his

enemies at his feet, should find it in his heart, and be able to afford it in his magnanimity, to give to his foes a peace unshackled with a term, and to feed and to regenerate, and to love, and to restore, to more than all they had lost, all his conquered ones.

But what would that be compared to the "good tidings" which I bear from the King of kings to every sin-bound soul in this church, this morning, and to a whole hostile suffering creation?—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," to the end "that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

# Christ the Good Physician:

## THE SECOND LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, March 5th, 1871.

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted."—ISAIAH lxi. 1.

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YOU will notice the difference, that whereas in the clause which we were considering last Sunday, Christ was "*anointed*" to be the Evangelist, He is here "*sent*" to be the Good Physician. For the one He did by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was given to Him without measure; the other was, most appropriately, by the virtue of His human mission. "The Lord hath *anointed* Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath *sent* Me to bind up the broken-hearted."

The whole life of Christ, from end to end, was one great, recognised, felt mission. He never lost sight of it,—He never did one independent action. The authority from the Father,—the power by the Father,—the responsibility to the Father,—the glory claimed for the Father,—were everywhere. There is no expression which Christ more often repeated than, "I am sent," "He that sent me."

And you, brethren, you will never realize your being, or read yourself aright, till you see life a mission,—"I am sent to a work,—I must do it,—I must go back and give an account of it, and according as I have done it, so I shall be treated." The point of life, the strength of life, the unity of life, the dignity of life, the joy of life, lie in the power of the concentration of that one thought, "I am sent."

To find out every one their own particular mission is the first great secret which every man has to solve. This is not the place to do it; only for me to tell you the far ends of your mission.

And this is one—kindness, useful kindness.

I believe that the mission of every woman is two-fold:—one, to be a helper to man, to ministers, to missionaries, to her father, to her brother, to her husband, to her son, to her friend,—the other, to be a comforter, to go about everywhere characteristically a comforter.

And the mission to every man is to do good. If he is a religious man, to do it spiritually to the souls of men, and physically to their bodies. If he be not a religious man, still to do good, morally and materially, to all men.

I do not find, even among Christ's mission, the mission to reprove, or to condemn, or to judge. Still less can it be ours. For in this world of sin, and pain, and sorrow, to be everywhere a sunbeam in the dark, to soothe, to restore, to heal, to be an influence for gladness,—happy they who walk through the chambers of this great hospital, carrying with them their instruction everywhere,—"He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted." I cannot conceive a higher scope for life.

I feel that our subject, this morning, falls oppor-

tunely on a time when there is so much of sadness in our world. The bright and the redeeming spot of the war, —that war which, thank God, is now passing into history—has been the love which it has called out,— man's and woman's mission to the sick and wounded. Very beautiful and very noble it has been—a soft star against the horrors of midnight. But oh! brethren, what would this earth be, what a mass of helpless misery, what a hell, if far beyond all human aid and sympathy, there was not One with us here, at the side of every mourner—tender in His manhood, omnipotent in His godhead—with more than woman's gentleness, and with all a brother's grace,—who bears everywhere the strength of that divine commission, "He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted."

For the Father well knew what this world had become when He selected, not an archangel, but His own Son, and sent Him "to bind up the broken-hearted."

There are two kinds of broken hearts, the natural and the spiritual. They may be united; and sometimes the heart is broken in nature, when it is very plain that it may be broken in grace. Often, they are divided.

Now I do not for a moment think that Christ was sent to heal only the spiritually broken—that is, the contrite ones. I cannot so limit the grandness of His undertaking here,—any more than I could confine to penitents only the embrace of His large invitation, "Come unto Me, all that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Surely it is to all humanity. Every broken heart becomes the subject of Jesus's care, and is dear to Him if for no other reason in the world but for this—because it is unhappy.

And there are more broken hearts in our world

than most men think. And if every one who has ever, by unkindness or unfaithfulness, gradually sapped the foundation of another's life, and been a heart-breaker, could be tried for it, there are a great many now at large upon this earth who would be brought in murderers!

And very many there are who, in the silence of a bitter bereavement, or some hidden grief, too secret and too sacred to be told, going on in the solitude of their sorrow, not yet knowing the Healer's hand, carry with them from morning till evening, and from evening till morning, an aching, breaking heart, which is hastening them to their grave.

God forbid that I should doubt that to all, however little they may yet know it, Jesus is standing near, and whispering His unheeded overture of most restorative love.

But when a heart is really broken for sin, when the conscience throbs with memory, and the bitter sense of unpardoned guilt racks the mind, and it has no rest,—O then, let every penitent, let David, let Mary, let Peter say, what a Physician Christ is to them! All who ever come under that healing would rise up and bear witness with one consent—till they knew the sorrow, they never knew the joy,—that the pain was nothing to the soothing,—that gladly would they live again that suffering for those sweet influences of Christ,—and that He Himself was never known to them till they knew Him by His bindings. Happy, happy broken hearts, that have ever come under Jesus's care!

Christ was Himself well trained in the school of suffering hearts, that He might learn to "bind" the mourners. There are many who tell us that it was not the cross which killed Christ,—that He died upon

the cross too soon to make that possible,—that the real cause of death was a broken heart. Whether that be so or not, it is clear that all which goes to break men's hearts, felt He. Does sorrow,—do reverses,—does a very hard life,—does much solitude of feeling,—does unwearied, unrelieved labour,—does the bitterness of scorn and the cruelty of contumely,—does the faithlessness of friends,—does bereavement,—does suffering long drawn out,—does constant disappointment,—does the sight of others' anguish,—does continual unrest, break men's hearts? He had all that. And His frame was weak, and His nerves were sensitive. But He had much more than that. As the representative Man, as the substitute for sinners, He knew and He tasted the breakings of the soul,—temptations, awful in their severity,— the tremendous tension of thought,—inward struggle,—the onslaught of all the powers of darkness,—the immeasurable burden of imputed guilt,—the hidings of His Father's face,—desertion, desolation,—the hell of the mind. He knows, as none other knew or shall know, what He is treating, when He deals with a "broken heart."

No wonder, then, that the "bindings" are what they are. Let me tell you one or two of their traits.

They are delicate. I can find no other word. Every one who has had them will understand that word. They are delicate,—delicate so as to meet exery exquisite feeling,—no one need shrink from them,—delicate.

And they are very wise. You at once feel that you are under a master-hand. There is no possibility of a mistake. It is omniscience—the omniscience of a personal experience that knows all, that knows you, guiding the hand of perfect love.

And they are sure and thorough. Jesus never did a partial thing. There is no such thing as a half-cure in that treatment. Rather, the weakness is turned into the more strength, and the sickness is the very element which makes the health. They say that the bone is the strongest in the part where it was once broken. Assuredly that is true in the Divine setting,—so true that no heart, which has not known a breaking, knows indeed what strength is.

It is not for me to venture to describe to you the methods of that Great Physician. None but His patients know them, and they need no words. And those who have not felt it would not understand it.

Only this let me say,—in order that no one may be surprised, or faint under the process. He very often begins by giving a person more pain. Sometimes He commences by turning the natural into a spiritual sorrow. Sometimes He gradually increases the spiritual sorrow, and makes it agony, and the poor broken one feels—"Can this be the way to be cured?" and cries out, "My wound gets deeper,—my load grows heavier,—my weakness is extreme,—I shall sink,—I shall die,—is this 'binding?' It is all right, it is all right. The Holy Spirit must "convince first of sin,"—the Physician must probe,—the bad parts must be opened,—what is stagnant must be stimulated,—what is corrupt must be cleaned,—what is mortified must be taken away. The good Samaritan "poured in oil and wine"—or rather, it is "vinegar"—"oil and vinegar." And is not this "the vinegar" to make "the oil" work?

But in the laboratory of heaven, there are sweet salves, sweeter than all the herbs of Gilead:—the balm of the first sense of pardon,—the odour of sanctity,—the ointment of God's love,—the anodyne of spiritual rest.

And the ligatures which He draws are so soft and so fast. True, when you are being bound up, you may at first find that you have not what you once called liberty. There may be a feeling of imprisonment for a season; but it is a sweet prison to "prisoners of hope," who are only with Him, shut up with Him, the Keeper whom they love.

And the bindings are very restful. The bound one is very conscious of the virtue which every moment is going out of them, and he well knows that they will be taken off as soon as he can bear it, and that he will be well presently—O how well!—in a world where there are no relapses.

I once heard a prayer of a rough ploughman in a village school-room; and this was in his prayer—"Dear Lord, if there be any poor stricken one in this room to-night, come and bind him up, and bind Thyself, Lord, into the binding." To that prayer I say Amen for you—"Bind Thyself, Lord, into the binding."

May you all be "broken hearts" bound up! Why do I wish it? For your sakes? Yes, because a broken, bound-up heart is safe,—secure from injury without, and knit together within into a true unity—one with itself, one with God—and dear to Him, dear to Him as only a thing saved can be to Him that saved it.

And not for your sakes only—for His—the Good Physician's—that He may be glorified. For yours and mine are bad cases—and if ever we live, it will be a very great praise to Him who bound us up. Therefore, Lord, bind up our poor hearts, that Thou mayest be magnified in Thine own handiwork.

# Christ the Liberator:

## THE THIRD LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, March 12th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"To proclaim liberty to the captives."—ISAIAH lxi. 1.

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IT IS a word which just matches with the sovereignty of the act. It is so large, and joyous, and free; it so takes, as granted, that the thing is quite done,—"to proclaim," "to proclaim liberty to the captives." It is just the same in the fourth of St. Luke, but there we read it "preach." It is literally, "to cry as a herald," "to herald liberty to the captives." For it is a high note,—the note of liberty. We cannot whisper it,—we must fling it wide and loud,—"proclaim liberty to the captives."

It is a blessed name of Jesus, and as true as it is blessed,—the Liberator. We can scarcely conceive anything grander, or more delightful, than to be always going about making everything free. Suppose that in some mysterious way you had the power—it was given you as your office—to be in all places, and to all persons, an emancipator,—not, as some great philanthropists have been, to one class of their fellow-creatures at one time,—but universally, to all creation. What a life it would be! What a continual radiance! That is Christ,—always and essentially the

Liberator. We love to think that such a Captive as He was once, has now such a recompense. To this end, Christ first liberated Himself.

Let us look at that. As in Him there was no sin, He never, indeed, could know the worst of all bondage,—the bondage of the spirit to the flesh. I suppose His mind was never actually dragged by His body,—His devotions were never clogged,—His judgment was never warped,—His soul was never bound, like ours, by a grovelling thought, or a wicked imagination, or a distorting medium. But He did know the restraints of fear,— for "He was heard in that He feared." He did feel the harassing of indecision,—"What shall I say?" He did experience the irksomeness of the sense of a body too narrow for the largeness of His soul,—"How am I straitened." And He did go through the contractions of all that is material, and the mortifying conventionalities of life,—for He was hungry, and He was thirsty, and He was weary, and He was sad, and He was the sport of fools, and He stood feeble and helpless in the hands of exulting and wicked men; and that grand nature went through the oppressiveness of temptation,—and He was tied with the common malefactors' thongs,—and His worn-out body was nailed and made fast to a tree,—and He was laid in the small bed of man's last prison-house. From the day when He lay in His swaddling clothes in the manger, to the moment when the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, He was a captive:—He tasted the pressure of the humiliation of the confinement of our common manhood.

From all this Christ freed Himself—distinctly, progressively, He freed Himself. He bound the great binder hand and foot;—He repelled him at every turn, and dashed him, like Lucifer, out of the sky. Step by step, "He led captivity captive;"—He made for Himself a spiritual body, which, in its own nature, and by the law of its being, soared at once beyond the trammels of its humanity. He burst the bands of

death," because it was not possible He should be holden of it:" in everything, He asserted, and claimed, and took His freedom.

I do not say that by virtue of His Divine nature He was free,—that would not be free as man is free;—but He became free, like us. Freedom is a relative word—freedom pre-supposes captivity. He was a captive that He might be a freeman; and He went through the processes of the emancipation, miraculously, indeed, in many parts—but still, it was a real emancipation. And therefore He is the Liberator, because He was once Himself the prisoner.

And all Christ did, and all Christ was, upon this earth—His whole mission—was essentially either to teach, or to give, liberty. His preaching was, for the most part, to change the constraint of law into the largeness of love. Every word He said, in private or in public, proved expansion. He was always opening new fields of thought and being, and bidding man to go out into the breadth of the liberty of their sonship, and their destiny, and their immortality. "The time cometh, that neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father:" "God is a Spirit:" "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt *not*,' 'thou shalt *not*'—negative.' All negatives are narrowing. "I say unto you, Love." All love is broad. His disciples were always looking down into the valleys and shut-up things,—He led them to the high hills beyond,—"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Men saw the shadows,—He pointed to the sun travelling in its strength, without which those shadows could not be, and into which all those shadows were to be absorbed. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy;"—"Go and sin no more;"—"Neither do I condemn thee, go in peace."

All His miracles were liberating miracles. They were all of one character,—to loose and set free. The

withered hand,—the nerve-tied foot,—the chained tongue,—the impotent body,—the cells of blindness, the dungeons of deafness,—the imprisoned faculties,—the fettered soul,—the enthralled, hell-bound being,—the entombed life: He always opened the door and let it go;— it was one continual "Ephphatha." Wherever He passed, He found slavery, and He left freedom.

And even the three days when His own dear body was in the tomb, the separated soul, true, as I believe, to its nature, went and "preached to the spirits in prison," that some, even in Hades,—made exceptions that day for the greater triumph of the cross,—might proclaim Him, even to other worlds, Liberator.

It is just what this world wants. The fact is, that from the time when the gate closed on Eden, men, shut out from God, and shut into themselves, have all passed into captivity. And there is no heart, until it is made free indeed, which is not, in some aspect of it, a prison-house.

If I were to go up and down among you, should I find, at this moment, one in this congregation who is perfectly free?

There sits one,—he could not say exactly why,—but he has a general sense of being straitened and hedged up;—he is conscious of powers and desires far beyond anything he has ever reached, or done, or felt, —he longs to go out and be beyond his present self, —but his circumstances confine him,—his money confines him,—his body cramps him,—his worse self incapacitates his better self,—he always meets a bar when he has gone a little way. The world might call him a happy man, and very free, but can he do what he wishes? can he go wherever he likes? is he what he means to be by-and-by? is he free?

There is another. He is tied to his past sins,—he can never get rid of them. Perhaps they were sins, long, long ago, almost on the horizon of childhood. But they are memories which stand round him like

walls of iron. They are always darkening. He has felt them, and confessed them, and repented of them, and forsaken them,—but the question comes to him, —"Are the sins of my childhood forgiven? are they all forgiven? have they ceased to be?" And his heart answers, "No,"—and that thought is holding him, day and night, in a terrible grasp.

To another, it is not memory, it is a present fact,—there is a habit that he cannot break. In everything but one, that man's life is irreproachable,—but there is one besetting sin, and he cannot get rid of it,—it is a chain of adamant,—and every time he does that thing, it rivets another and another link. Thousands of times he has thought that he had escaped, and he has been brought back,—and though it is sometimes pleasant, it is a very tyrant, and he writhes under it like a bond-slave;—night and day he could gnash his teeth at his own folly and his own misery!

There is a young man—he is in a certain set—he does not like it, he hates it, he would be rejoiced to get out of it—but what with his fear of ridicule,—what with the honour he feels he is committed to,—what with the simple power of association, he cannot shake off people whom, all the time, he despises and dislikes,—and he lives, at once the favourite and the tool of fashion,—he is gay and he is wretched!

Or look at that one who sits miserable. He is not without religious thoughts; rather, religious thoughts are never absent from his mind. But he has no comforts,—he has no sense of acceptance,—he does nothing like a happy child of God. When he prays, his prayers are all forced,—he never goes out of himself,—he never forgets himself,—he has no real communion with the Father,—his very intellect is dwarfed,—his being is tied,—and he loathes and almost curses himself every day, as if he were a hypocrite.

I see another. He does not show it, but inwardly he is living in a continual fear,—he is always thinking that some judgment is ready to fall upon him, and

that he well deserves it. Death is very often before him,—he would gladly forget it, but he cannot. He does not know whether it is the article of death he dreads, or whether it is its consequences,—but it is quite certain that death haunts him,—it throws its long, dark shadow in his path everywhere. And the awfulness of the Advent—what if Christ should come? those terrible convulsions of nature, and that solitude with God, and that dread account;—and every time, he reels under it; he tries to escape,—but it is like a black mountain, always shutting him in, and flinging down its darkness upon him!

It is to all these, and to many more, that I am sent in Christ's name this morning—"to proclaim liberty." Do not you know that for this very end God has "laid upon His shoulder the key of David," that "He may shut and none shall open, and He may open and none shall shut,"—and that by the same turning of that key, He shuts out fear and sin, and shuts in safety and peace?

And has Christ really committed that key to such a one as I am,—that I should bind and I should loose? May I be as the angel to Peter, to come to any one of you and say, "The door is open, rise up, and go out?" I do say it. For He has paid the price for which that door is opened, and He hath sheathed the flaming sword, "which turned every way," in His own breast. And when He burst through all the tombs,—the moral tombs and the physical tombs in which we all lay buried, and when He went out into life and glory, He was not Himself alone,—He was at that moment the covenanted Head of a mystical body, and all that body rose with Him. And we, being His members, did then actually ascend. If so be you have union with Christ, you are risen, bondage is past, you are free. "And if the Son make you free,"—the Son to whom all the government and power are entrusted,—the Son who represents the Father's whole mind and will,—"then are ye free indeed."

Therefore I take my stand, and I say, "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." I go to those who are feeling the littleness of everything, who are so cramped in all their circumstances, and I tell them that in Christ they will find the intention of their being, that in Him everything is great—that there are the soul's true ranges—that in Him, and never till they find it in Him, in Him they will be satisfied.

I go to those who are drawing and dragging the heavy load of their unforgiven sins, and I proclaim to them that they are toiling in an unnecessary task,—I tell them that those sins do not exist,—I tell them that all connection is cut off between the guilty past and them,—I tell them that it is only want of faith which prevents those shackles being burst,—I tell them to rise and to go out from that past into a holy, happy, unquestioning future.

And I go to those who cannot overcome some wicked passion, and I say, Christ, and only Christ, is greater than that passion, and never will you really overcome that passion, till you have Christ in your heart. Union with Jesus is the remedy. Try it, try it, and see whether, when you bring the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart, the power of your sin does not die away before the presence of the Lord Jesus. Believe me, that it is only His to crush the horrid head of that serpent-thing which now torments and envenoms you!

And I go to those who cannot escape from the spell of the society in which they are living, and I tell them that if they once knew communion with Christ, if they had one taste of what His friendship is, those people of the world, with all their fascination, would lose all their power, you could snap it like a gossamer thread.

And I go to that poor, shut-up, prayerless one,—that soul to whom the heavens are as iron and brass, and which feels hard as the nether mill-stone,—and I say, "Believe that you are loved, believe that you are loved, and tears will run,—your heart will grow soft,—

it will be like an unsealed fountain, and your rested thoughts will soon flow lovingly and gushingly, simply because you feel you are loved."

And I go to those abject ones, immured in their fears and their fancies, and I tell them, "Death is gone; there is no death to a believer; death died when Jesus died; death was buried and had no resurrection,—it is only life now." And when you come to die, it will not be alone,—Jesus and good angels will be there, it will be He who carries the assuring wounds you meet,—and that dear, gentle, loving face will make all dread of death impossible. He came "to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage."

So I would go to you and tell of liberty. And I tell you that there is at this moment, if you will only believe it, nothing between you and the bright heaven of God's own eternal love. Oh! you would walk with a light step if you knew that your sins were forgiven, and that Jesus was yours. But oh! who shall unbind the cords of unbelief which are now holding you back from the unbinding? O the omnipotence of God's grace—"Lord, make Thy people willing in the day of Thy power."

True, it needs an effort. The very striking off the manacles will hurt the poor prisoner in the act of his liberation. But when they are once off, who will regret or remember the pain? "Stretch out your hand," and the manacles will fall.

This world is Hagar; but we, brethren, we are not of Hagar, we are of Sarah. "We are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free." And if you are really Christ's Church, you are citizens of that Jerusalem which is "free," and she "is the mother of us all."

# Christ the Revealer:

## THE FOURTH LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, March 19th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"And the opening of the prison to them that are bound."—ISAIAH lxi. 1.

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THIS clause of the sentence,—which falls to us this morning in order,—Jesus took as His text in the fourth chapter of Luke, thus, "Recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." A bold paraphrase,—either referring to those special horrors which went on in many prisons, in the putting out the eyes of the prisoners, and the sores which were caused by the galling of the chains,—or else, more simply, it implies that blindness is itself one and not the least kind of bondage. And there can be no prison more or worse than that shut-up feeling, which is the necessary consequence of the want of sight.

It will be enough for us to take it in that sense this morning, and to consider that a very important part of the way by which Christ "opened the prison to them that were bound" was by the "recovering of sight to the blind." For surely, in this great prison-house, there are no more fast-bound captives than those who are fettered by physical blindness,—or, which is still more enthralling, by that intellectual and moral darkness of which that blindness is the allegory. To

this, therefore, we address ourselves—Christ the opener of the shut eyes,—Christ the Revealer.

The lessons to be drawn from blindness, and the restoration of sight, would be much more familiar to the Jews than they are to us. For this affliction is so far more common in the East, and so many are they who suffer from it, that the blind are continually recognized in the Bible as a distinct class, and they are even made the subjects of legislation in the Levitical law, — a speciality to which there is no parallel in any European code. Therefore, it was no small part of the glory of the beneficence of the expected Messiah, that He should meet this great public calamity, and be a "recoverer of sight to the blind."

We, of course, have to do now with spiritual blindness. And I propose to take Christ's miracles, which He wrought on the eye, as the illustration of the way in which He deals with the darkness of the soul.

And first, what is spiritual blindness? It is that incapacity, that want of power, which hinders the mind from seeing invisible things:—truth, an unseen world, God. It may arise from different causes,—though the real root of it is almost always in the affections. It may arise from something coming in between the eye of the mind and the object which it ought to see. Or it may arise from weakness in that organ which admits the light,—that is, faith. Or it may arise from the want of a proper connection in the medium between that organ and the sense or faculty which is to catch the rays when they are transmitted, that is, religious intelligence. Or it may be in the seat itself where vision is exercised and applied,—that is, the soul, or the inner life of a man. From whatever cause the blindness comes, it is found in very various degrees,—degrees varying according to natural constitution, or according to habit, or according to the length of time which it has been allowed to go on. All are blind. Even those who suffer from it the least

are still, compared to what they might be, and with what they ought to be, blind. And however clear the mental sight may be, and however acute the perceptions may be about all other things, all minds, without a single exception, until some process has passed upon them, are totally and absolutely blind about spiritual things.

Nevertheless, practically, and among us to-day, there are shades in the darkness. For we all, more or less, have been under healing treatment, and according as we have accepted or rejected it, according as we have acted upon it or not, so to-day is our condition. There are some who really can see nothing at all,—all spiritual things are to them a perfect blank. There are others who grope. There are, to whom, by long cherishing of the darkness, it has become judicial. And there are a few happy ones, to whom there is left nothing but a little film, and it seems only to want one more touch, and they shall "know even as they are known."

I should suppose that you all,—though in different stages,—are consciously blind—and that you desire light, a clearer insight into those things which belong to your salvation and your peace. And I desire now to set before you Christ as the Revealer—the one only Physician for this deep malady, to whom it belongs to unseal the hidden mysteries, and to bring back the lost power of spiritual vision.

We may truly say that Christ does this by His very being and person, because He has embodied into His humanity, and therefore made personal to us to see, what else must have remained for ever beyond the reach and scope of all comprehension and fancy,—the Godhead, the perfection of holiness and wisdom, the mind of the Almighty. Therefore, He is called the Word,—because, as a word we speak represents and declares the invisible idea which lies behind that word, and of which that word is the indication, so does Christ, by His very person, and character, and life,

exhibit the Father. And you will never arrive at a definite, or even a proximate conception of God and truth, until you study them in the nature and the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is essentially, in Himself, the Revealer.

He also reveals—that is, removes veils—for that is the meaning of reveals—He removes veils,—veils either in the nature of things, or veils which we have drawn by our own sins—by the Holy Ghost whom He bequeathed, whom He purchased, whom He sends, who He is.

But I have to do now only with His particular province in His immediate action upon the heart, without any distinction as to the means used,—pictured to us by His own ministry when He was upon the earth.

There are five instances recorded in which Christ gave sight to the blind,—four in the gospels, one in the Acts. There were evidently many more not specially related, for it was His habit to open the eyes of the blind, which is plain from its being made one of the evidences, the popular evidences, of His mission. But these five stand out in detail.

The first is the two blind men of Capernaum, in the ninth of St. Matthew,—a miracle particularized by the previously required faith on the part of the sufferers, —the measure of the faith made the measure of the cure—and by a touch of Jesus's hand.

The second is that which took place at Jerusalem, mentioned in the ninth chapter of St. John, which elicited more enquiry and objection than any other miracle which Jesus ever did. It is characterized by the spittle made clay, by the anointing of both eyes, by the act of faith and patience which was demanded, —"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And it is remarkable concerning this miracle, that whereas at the beginning of the chapter, Christ repudiated all idea of this poor man's affliction being retributive for anything he or his parents had ever done, still He, at

the end of the chapter, equally speaks of the judicial blindness of the Pharisees, who would be made blind because they would not see.

The third occasion is the man at Bethsaida, in the eighth of St. Mark, and which the peculiar features are—that Jesus took the blind man by the hand,—that He led him out of the town,—and did the miracle in private,—that He again used the spittle and the laying-on of hands, and that the cure was gradual and progressive,—a solitary fact in the whole catalogue of Christ's wonder-works.

The fourth was at Jericho, mentioned by the three first evangelists,—the healing of Bartimeus. I do not enter now into the supposed contradictions or difficulties of the miracle,—difficulties which admit of a very easy solution. But I note in it these distinctive traits—it was a miracle opposed, and which some tried to prevent,—the will of the sufferer was put to the test,—and, like all the rest but one, it was not done without an actual contact.

The fifth was St. Paul at Damascus, where Christ, indeed, employed the ministrations of Ananias, but was not Himself the less the doer of it;—"Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Where we observe both the human instrumentality, and also that the opening of the eye and the opening of the mind were cotemporaneous,—for at the same moment the scales fell from both.

I might well leave you to put together all these things by yourselves, for your own comfort and guidance. But permit me just to go a step or two with you in the way.

You will remark that in every instance in which a blind man received his sight—St. Paul himself not the exception, as we see in the twelfth verse, though it is not mentioned in the narrative—there was in some way or other a touch, in other words, there was positive contact with Christ

This is just what you have to learn. The way to see is to be more intimate with Jesus,—to have more actual connexion and union between your soul and Christ. Then, the virtue passes from Him to you. You will never succeed till you do that. Put yourself into some closer relationship to Christ, by a thought, a prayer. Let Christ lay His hand on you. Feel, "He is doing it." Feel, "Now Jesus is dealing with me. It is an act of His omnipotence if I am ever to see Him, or anything else as I ought to see."

This leads to another circumstance, which belongs to all the openings. There was the pre-requisite both of faith and of confession of faith. The only exception is the case in the eighth chapter of St. Mark—and some have thought in that instance alone the cure was slow, and for awhile imperfect, because there was the omission of the confession of faith. The man in the ninth of St. John does not, indeed, speak his faith, but he acts it. He went to Siloam. And you must have faith beyond your knowledge, and trust which exceeds your present experience. Though you cannot yet see your Deliverer,—and of course none of the blind men could see Christ till the miracle was finished—you must have an expectation that you will see Him; you must have a great conception that Christ is, and that He is more than you yet know,—that He can and that He will do what you want,—that the time is come,—that you are just going to see some great thing. And more than that—you must not only feel that, but you must do something—you must do something in proof of it—anything you like—only something which is in your conscience to do, and which you mean to be for this very purpose,—to show that you trust, and that you expect to go to Siloam.

Thirdly, remember that twice Christ used the spittle, once the clay, once a man;—all mean instruments, but instruments effectual because He used them, and because He was in them. Then why

should not He employ me, — why should not He employ you,—or any other very poor thing,—to do this more than angelic work ?

Fourthly, I like to know that once, at least, Christ did it very secretly, and in retirement. Perhaps there was some reason in that man's character or history at Bethsaida, why "He took him by the hand, and led him out of the town." Certainly there was a gentleness, and a sympathy, and a delicacy. And poor ignorant scholars, who feel the disgrace of their dullness, need to be dealt with very tenderly. And Christ will deal very tenderly with you. No teacher was ever so considerate. He will not expose you, — He will not hurt your feelings more than is necessary ;—and the greatest part of all He will do when you are alone with Him. The best light is the light that comes in our solitudes, when we are with God only.

And, fifthly, the way Jesus took once, when He was on the earth, is, I believe, His general rule now, —the eye of the heart opens gradually. Do not wonder that many things look more confused to you as you go on, than they did when your soul was quite dark. This is to exercise earnestness and perseverance. Thank God ! There must be some sight to see confusion,—there is no mistake which has not some truth in it,— "the men," though they were "like trees," were "men," and they "walked." Midnight has no shadows, but if you have doubts, if you have fears, if you have questions, if you have difficulties, the miracle is begun,—the enlightening is going on,—the comprehension of the mind is opening,—and it is only the glare of the first light upon the eye unaccustomed to the sunshine which makes the dimness.

If, then, any part of God's heaven is now shut out from you,—if there is any doctrine that you have tried to see and you cannot,—if God's love is hidden from you,—if you are miserably imprisoned in the thick darkness of your own orderless soul—let me advise

you,—Honour Christ in His office and prerogative of the Revealer,—submit those poor lost faculties of your soul:—"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Be near Him,—let Him touch you, go alone with Him out of the town.

What you want is not truth,—it is the eye to see it. There are beautiful things near you,—like Hagar's water, one touch of Christ, there it is at your feet,—your pardon, your peace, your heaven, it is all there, just as nature, in all her loveliness, is encircling a blind man. But Christ must show you. Only Christ shows Christ. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him."

John saw a book, and he "wept" very much "because no one could open the book, till, behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, He prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." So Jesus opens truth to hearts, and hearts to truth; and he is free indeed whom the truth makes free.

I trust to your kindness not to allow the collection for the Scripture Readers' Association to suffer this morning because I have not preached for it. The five Scripture Readers whom the Society employ are very useful in the districts in which they are appointed, and very great helpers to the over-taxed clergymen under whom they work. It is only to be regretted that the funds do not admit of their number being doubled. We are thinking also, soon, of associating, with our Scripture Readers, Parochial Mission Women. And are not these men and these women among the means the great Revealer uses for "the recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised?" Therefore, as you have received much, help to send those who shall take that light into the dark places—the haunts of poverty and sin,—of which you know very little, but which are very bad, and for which you are responsible,—in your own town.

# Christ the Jubilee of His Church:

## THE FIFTH LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, March 26th, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

"To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God."—ISAIAH lxi. 2.

OUR Lord's text of His sermon at Nazareth stopped at the end of the first clause of this sentence. He did not go on to "the day of vengeance of our God,"—probably for this reason,—because His first Advent had nothing to do with "vengeance;"—He did not come then to judge the world, but to save the world; and He could not, therefore, have said of those words, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

But, remember, that that "vengeance" of that "day," being "the vengeance of *our God*," is not against His own people, but against their enemies—including those worst enemies,—Death, which is then to be destroyed,—Sin, which is then to be shut out,—and Satan, who is then to be crushed. For then, God will avenge Himself on all which has ever dared to touch His Church.

And, even in this view, it is pleasant to notice that the "acceptance" is for a "year," the "vengeance" for a "day." "To proclaim the acceptable *year* of the Lord, and the *day* of vengeance of our God."

If our Lord left out "vengeance," well may I. It belongs neither to my province, nor to this dispensation. Therefore, I will keep within "the acceptable year of the Lord."

There can be no doubt that the "acceptable year of the Lord" relates to the Jewish "jubilee." We may take the expression, "acceptable year," as meaning either that it was the year when God specially accepted, or that it was the year itself acceptable. In both senses it is true,—for "the year of jubilee" was at once a standing proof and memorial of God's election and acceptance of Israel,—and, as a year of rest, and freedom, and restoration, it was the most "acceptable," because it was the most congenial to the mind of God.

This acceptable "year of jubilee" was the most remarkable institution which ever formed part of any civil economy. Every seventh year of the Jews was ordained of God to be an acceptable year, or a year of rest. Every seventh sabbatical year was "jubilee." This would make the jubilee fall on every forty-ninth year; and it remains still a question whether the jubilee was the forty-ninth or the fiftieth year. There are five Jewish authorities on both sides of that question. But as in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, which is the chief reference on the whole subject, it says, "A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you," the most popular idea is probably also the safest—that the jubilee was the year after the seventh seventh, and that thus two years of rest came in conjunction. Or a partial solution of the difficulty might be found in the difference which there is between the political and the ecclesiastical year of the Jews, which began six months apart.

Whichever way it was, "the jubilee"—the word is derived either from the Hebrew name of a trumpet, or from a verb, to release and give back,—the jubilee commenced on the tenth day of the month Tisri—the great day of atonement, and the only appointed feast that the Jews had.

There is surely a deep meaning in the fact that this great season of joy and triumph had its base in the day of expiation, and grew immediately out of the

period of deepest penitence and humiliation. Even as Easter springs from Lent,—or as every best happiness in the Christian life comes out of abasement and sorrow,—or as Jesus Himself mounted not to His glory till He had passed through His shame.

In the evening, then, of the 10th of Tisri, the silver trumpets of the priests proclaimed "the jubilee" begun; and for a whole year from that moment, the most singular of all Jewish laws took effect. In that country, no property, except houses in walled towns, —the law extended to all houses in towns not walled, —no property could be held for a period beyond the next jubilee. At "the jubilee," all property returned to its original owner; none could be permanently alienated; and the value, therefore, of everything, was regulated by the length of the time which had still to run to the next jubilee.

A similar rule appplied to servants. Foreign servants, or servants taken in war, were not released at the jubilee. But every servant, or slave, being a Jew, terminated his service at the jubilee, and was then perfectly free. Even those who in the seventh year had chosen to continue servants, and had had their ears, in token of it, bored and nailed to the door, were nevertheless absolutely emancipated at the jubilee.

Also, at the same time, all debts were cancelled, and every debtor, of every kind and degree, was liberated and made loose from his debt.

And further, the land itself had rest. No agricultural process was to be carried on, neither sowing nor reaping. The physical quietness of nature was to reflect the greater quietness of man,—"the jubilee" was one universal repose.

It is evident that all this required and involved miracle. Had God not given supernatural crops and extraordinary abundance in the year preceding, food must have failed. If God had not fenced the country from its enemies, the rest would have been broken. But just so it was. The soil did bring forth exceed-

ingly in preparation for it, and it is a recorded fact that Judah was never invaded in a year of jubilee. It is true that for 490 years, the Jews did not keep any sabbatical year. And what was the consequence? They owed seventy years to God, and He required them. For seventy years they were therefore kept in Babylon, while the land had its rest. The captives were avenged by their captors' captivity,—the transgressors paid the most accurate penalty for what they had forfeited to God.

It was this "acceptable year," then, which Christ came to "proclaim," and of which He said, being Himself the expositor of Himself,—"this day it is fulfilled."

Some think that our Lord's three years' ministry actually fell on the jubilee, and that there was, therefore, a chronological literalness in His word, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

But, whether it was so or not, it was not in one year, or in three years, that the prophecy really came to pass. It belongs to the whole Christian dispensation; it is now; it is being fulfilled while I stand here and speak; we are standing upon jubilee. Therefore, it is the more my privilege to try and trace the fulfilment.

It was a grand provision of the Jewish law, and I can never look at it without admiration, that all property, however separated, should revert, at an appointed time, to its first and proper owner. Whatever had once belonged to a child of Abraham could not pass away from him for ever. It was originally a gift of God, and the gift was indefectible. See it in the Anti-type. We have sold everything away from us,—and for what? For an apple of Sodom,—for a mess of pottage,—for "that which satisfieth not,"—for naught,—for "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

And we could never have got it back again; it was gone, utterly gone. The beautiful garden,—the tree of life,—the presence of God in the cool of the day,—the

holy fellowship of sweet society,—the pleasant work,—the purity of heart,—the approving conscience,—the joy of a sinless state,—it had all passed away. And there was no price that we could ever have paid for its recovery.

But Christ is "jubilee," and jubilee is restoration. It is all come back; and, as everything must be in Christ, it comes back more and better than it went,—even as He is more and better than all things else in the world. For He has paid a price in His own blood which more than covers all; and therefore, the restitution, to every one who believes, is more than complete.

See it. We have a better Paradise awaiting us than ever Eden was,—and this whole earth—not one privileged spot—will presently be as "the garden of the Lord." And of the tree of life,—the food suited for our new and spiritual being, by which we are to live for ever,—we may freely eat. And we have God, not at seasons, but a continual presence, speaking to us always by still small voices in the heart, and we can answer Him. And the communion, though broken off a little while, is all re-set; and we shall know one another, and we shall love one another, and enjoy one another, (though death has parted us) for ever and for ever. And it is ours, and will be ours through eternity, to work in the garden of God's Church, "to dress it and to keep it." And by God's Spirit in us, we have a holiness which is far better than innocence. And if our conscience tells us of sin, it tells us, too, by sure witness, that the sin is all pardoned, more than pardoned. And in Christ we have a righteousness given us with which the righteousness of the unfallen Adam was not to be compared; and the lost image is restored, and more than restored to us; and very soon we shall "wake up in His likeness" again, and we "shall be satisfied with it." And we have the sweetness of a joy not given in Eden—that we trace it all to Jesus.

Do we not, then, brethren, come back and more

than come back, to our old pleasant places, and enter into our first possessions? And are we not reinstated in all things, and all in accordance with one great law of God's government, that Christ is "jubilee?"

And the restored inheritance, thank God, finds us free. By one great act of Christ, a universal liberty is proclaimed to all believers. True, within the veil a vast work went on, and a tremendous price was paid; but to us it comes in the grandeur of a simple royal boon, by a King's edict—"Be free." There are no debts now,—there are no judgments hanging over our heads,—there are no fetters,—there are no prisons of the soul;—every chain falls off; every door has opened; for bondage we have life,—and all because the appointed time is come,—Jesus has died,—Jesus has ascended,—and Jesus is "jubilee."

And the season of rest is come. God rests in His dear Son, and therefore He rests in those whom He sees in Him. The Son rests in the Father, because the Father rests in His people. And God, resting in us, we rest in God; and resting in God, our consciences are at rest, our desires are at rest, our redeemed being is at rest. Hitherto, indeed, it is only the beginning of rest; but it is the first of a perfect series. Now we rest from the condemnation of sin,—now we rest from the dominion of sin,—now we rest from the spell of sin,—gradually we are resting from the victory of sin,—gradually we are resting from the practice of sin,—presently we shall rest from the contact with sin, and the presence of sin, and the sound of sin, and the breath of sin. We toil, but we rest in the toil,—because the toil is sweet, and the end is sure, and that blessed time is near, when work will be all rest, and rest will be all work. And all is all rest, because Christ has rested from His finished work, and made it "jubilee," and rest is jubilee, and jubilee is Christ.

What a mercy and what a joy that our lot has fallen on this "acceptable year of the Lord,"—that it is this day that our eyes see it,—a year of all accepted

things,—the season of God's acceptation,—Christ accepted for the Church, and the Church accepted for Christ,—accepted desires, accepted services, accepted prayers, accepted offerings, accepted children, accepted friends, accepted bodies, accepted intellects, accepted souls,—all one great acceptance,—acceptance sealed, acceptance owned, acceptance irrevocable, acceptance for ever. Be always reminding yourself and reminding God that it is His own "acceptable year." Take what you will in prayer to God, and command that it shall be granted you, upon this plea—that it is the year of acceptance which He has proclaimed. Take another soul, any soul you care most about, and lay that soul before God, and say, "Is not it the time, Lord, for this soul's salvation, the time that Thou Thyself hast called acceptable?"

And all your Lenten exercises, and all your offices, and all your offerings, poor, unworthy things, cast them at His feet,—do not doubt they are welcome, for "the acceptable year of the Lord is come." It is a great thing to do anything in an "acceptable year."

Surely, brethren, surely, it should be all joy now, seeing the "jubilee" is here. Those angels' voices on the hills of Bethlehem, with their sweet midnight music, ushered it in; and the archangel's trumpet will soon take up the same note, and echo it wide to the whole world:—"The Bridegroom is come,"—and the world's desolation, and the world's fast, and the world's expectancy, are nearly over. It is no time now for bonds, or gloom. The appointed season of the Church's power, and the Church's glory, long waited for, is begun. Already it is grand festival of rest, and liberty, and love. It is all happy if you will only see it so. Take away "the spirit of heaviness,"—put on "the garment of praise,"—raise your hearts,—fling high your thoughts of triumph,—ye souls restored and free,—for it becometh well "the jubilee" to be glad, and to hold in more honour, and to bow before, and to give hallelujah to "the acceptable year of the Lord."

# Christ the Comforter:

## THE SIXTH LENTEN SERMON

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, BRIGHTON,

On Sunday Morning, April 2nd, 1871,

BY THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN, M.A.,

*Incumbent.*

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"To comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."—ISAIAH lxi. 2, 3.

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WE are passing from Lent to Easter. It is a passage which comes very often repeated in the Christian year, —from sorrow to gladness,—from sin to peace,—from shade to sunshine,—from the dusk to the light. And I know no verse which more than this can help the passing. And this is the thought which God sends us to-day for the passing—Christ the Comforter.

Did it ever occur to you to notice that each Person in the blessed Trinity is in turn called "the Comforter?" "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,"—that is the Father. "I will send you another Comforter,"—implying so delicately that the speaker Himself was one,—that was the Son. And of all the names of the Holy Ghost, this comes the oftenest—"the Comforter." So that we have three Comforters, and each is God. What a sad world this

must be,—to need such a provision! What a happy world this must be, which is so provided for,—a Holy Trinity of comfort.

There is certainly a danger of transferring, and making exclusive to the Holy Ghost, some of the attributes and offices which belong equally to the Son. We can, indeed, neither clothe in language, nor reduce to any definite thought, the process by which Christ now acts upon a man's soul. But He is, beyond a doubt, personally present with His Church always. That presence can never be negative. By His own union with us,—by His own sympathy,—by His own still voices,—by His own secret influences,—He communicates, actually, sensibly, with all His members; and those communications must be comforting ones. The Holy Ghost might as truly call Him as ever He called the Holy Ghost,—"another Comforter." For to Him, not by the Spirit only, but to Him,—to Christ in His own proper person,—it belongs "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

If you have never read the life of Christ with this view,—to see how He comforts,—it will well re-pay the search. From the time when the aged Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms, and recognized in Him "the consolation of Israel," which he had so long "waited for," to the last breathing on His disciples with those sweet, imparting words,—"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,"—He fulfilled, as none other ever did, that high command given to priesthood,—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably

to Jerusalem." Therefore, it was the second sentence which proceeded out of His mouth after He began His ministry,—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Therefore did mourners, of every kind and degree, come to Him to prove and show His comfortings. The perplexed enquirer, under the shadow of the night,—the unsatisfied woman at the well,—the poverty-stricken beggar at the roadside, —the man outcast from his church,—the sick,—the impotent,—the agonized,—the long-waiting ones,— the bereaved parents—the mourning mother—the desolate sisters,—the left disciples,—the separated Church,—the tempted and the sifted one,—the fallen woman,—the weeper at His feet,—the dying penitent, —all had their own proper look,—their own proper word,—their own proper touch,—just as they needed, and just as they could bear it. And none in vain. It was not, as with all other comforting, tentative,— an attempt to comfort,—but comfort real, satisfying, abundant. And how He did in each case,—how discriminatingly, how wisely, how lovingly, it would be very profitable to trace. And how they all *were* comforted. For He was one set for the work,—His life, His joy, His necessity,—"to comfort all that mourn in Zion." And remember this,—that what He was once, that He is for ever, — Jesus the Comforter.

But now let us observe more closely the actual words of the prophet concerning Christ. "Sent," that is the word from which my text springs. "Sent" was Christ for this very end—"to comfort all that mourn." And then, in the Hebrew balance, or antistrophe of the sentence, "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion." You may take the one as merely the expansion of the

other. Or, if you will, say, Christ comforts all,—He feels tenderly, and He deals mercifully; and He sends tokens to all, whatever their sorrow be,—but to them "that mourn in Zion,"—to them He does more,—He acts more definitely, more accurately, more completely. He "appoints," makes special, distinct, close appointment—"To comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion."

But who are these so "appointed" for? these "mourners in Zion?" Zion is always the emblem of joy and brightness—and it sounds in one's ears as a strange paradox—"to mourn in Zion." And "Zion" is the Church,—and the Church is joy and brightness;—and you are in the Church—you are enrolled citizens of Zion—and very strange it must seem to angels that those who are in the Church,—those that have Christ,—those who are the Lord's people,—those who have been admitted to the privileges of His chosen ones,—that they should "mourn." And yet this is the fact. And here is the wonder,—that this Church of Christ is full of mourners—I had almost said it is made up of mourners. But then, here is your vantage ground,—here is your hope,—your vocation,—you "mourn," but you are in His Church—you "mourn in Zion,"—and the appointments of Divine love are yours.

But your heart says, "Am I in Zion? am I in Christ?" Take your sorrow with you, and go now into Zion. Draw near unto Christ; let your sorrow lead you to be more conversant with Him, and make much of Him, and then you will be a "mourner in Zion." And so, whatever your grief found you, you will then be His, and you will come into all the promises, and He will "appoint" unto you.

To the Church-mourners, then, my message is; and

I ask Church-mourners to see the undertakings of Jesus.

There are three kinds of sorrow which pretty nearly fill up the whole circle of grief. There is spiritual, and there is providential, and there is indefinite—perhaps I may call it, constitutional sorrow. There is the sorrow of penitence,—there is the sorrow of bereavement,—there is the sorrow of a dull spirit and a heavy heart. And to each of these three classes Christ addresses Himself by His promise, and for each He has its own appointed remedy:—To the penitent, "beauty;" to the bereaved, "the oil of joy;" to the dispirited and cast down, "the robe of praise." "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

The first mourner in Zion, then, is the penitent. His emblem is "ashes." And throughout the Bible that image of "ashes" is always used. We have the expressions—"to sit in ashes," to be "clothed with ashes," to "pour ashes on the head," to "feed on ashes," "to be ashes." All convey the same thought,—a state worthless, a state defiled, a state vile, a state consumed, a state fit only for the burning. And that is the feeling of penitents,—the heart takes shame and condemnation to itself, and wraps round it its own conscious degradation and fear of judgment, and to those poor souls in their ashes, Jesus "appoints."

See the way:—He gives them "beauty,"—He does not simply take away "ashes," He turns "ashes" into "beauty." The original for "beauty" is a tiara—an ornament for the head. It is the same with the word used in the third of Zechariah, which is the best explanation of this chapter. Joshua "stood before the angel" in "filthy garments;" and the angel said, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to

pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair *mitre* upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by."

Now the whole of my text borrows illustration from a feast, and the mourners of all the three kinds are to be made ready to sit down, and to banquet with joy. Thus, then, it is now with the penitent. Christ does not only take away the darkness and the misery,—He does much more than that,—He changes them into "beauty." You can never simply and only get rid of sin. The only process to escape from what is bad is to put on what is very good. Need I say how it is done? You are wretched on account of your sins, and you feel too wicked and unsightly that God should ever look upon you,—you feel fit only to be thrown away. Jesus comes, and He puts on you the decorations of His own perfections, and He throws round you and mantles you in the white robe of His own spotless light. In a moment, you have beauty,—beauty so complete, so exquisite, that God Himself sees no blemish.

But I repeat—that the only method by which "the ashes" can be got rid of, is by that putting on of "beauty." And one reason why there are penitents in Zion now uncomforted, is this,—that they do not yet see how God acts with penitents. You must not be negatively *not* "ashes," but you must be positively "beauty;"—not only *not* "guilty," but righteous—not only *not* cast out, but a guest fit for the heavenly feast,—in other words, you must be "in Him" who is lovely, and in that loveliness you are lovely. The fact is you are looking for too little;—you look for pardon when you ought to be looking for righteousness;—expect the greater, and you will also get the less,—"beauty for ashes."

How Jesus was Himself the "ashes" to make your "beauty," I must not stop to say. But remember this,—that the red heifer was slain that its ashes might

mingle with the lustral water, to purify the unclean.

But there is another order of the afflicted, to whom we most commonly give the name of mourners,—the bereaved—and to whom, therefore, I apply the second clause,—"the oil of joy for mourning;" for they, too, must be fitted for the feast. Mourning was sent them for this very end,—that it might fit them for the feast. Therefore they have "the oil,"—the oil soft and "comforting,"—the oil of holy anointing,—the oil bright and good,—"the oil of joy." Jesus, that Prince of mourners, was Himself so consecrated with the ointment, that the very "oil" which made His sad manhood so peaceful, so sacred, so triumphant, flowed down to the weakest and to the lowest of His members, —"to the very skirts of His clothing."

Let me tell you one or two of the ingredients which go to make that "oil of joy." There is a drop—perhaps it is the sweetest—that though all go, He will never go. And close akin to it—that He who sent the sorrow, knowing best its burden because He has borne it, will Himself come the nearer and the dearer than before, and will proportion accurately the balm to the wound, and the strength to the day.

Then there is the thought,—that, wherever there is union with Christ, there is no real separation, and scarcely death,—only a thin veil for a very little while,—no relationship changed,—no love diminished, —union greater than before, because freer from sin. And very soon that hidden face and that silent voice will be back again, and every thing will be restored.

And then there is that simple sense of pardon in God's love which has such a strange power to the soul,—like a sunbeam in the bosom gathering up the clouds. And when sin, the source of all griefs, is gone, there is no grief worth naming after it.

And then the sweet consolation of holy duties,—now done for Jesus in a way never done before, and to which we feel *that* "oil" has consecrated us. And many a kind providence, and many a proof of tender

remembrance, and many a gentle voice of the soul, and many a soothing influence, falling so gratefully on the sore, and grated, and roughened paths,—there is the "oil."

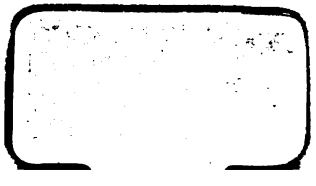
And then, now and then, they have so much of a present heaven in them,—such blessed voices within the veil, — and such independence of things around us,—and such elevation and rapture of mind,—these are all secrets which perhaps none but the bereaved know,—but those who do, they understand well what that means,—"the oil of joy for mourning."

But there is a third rank in Zion's mourners perhaps the largest; and I do not know whether these are not the most to be pitied. They have no very definite cause of grief—but, partly from natural habit of mind and body, partly from many little circumstances, partly from temptation, they carry with them, from morning to evening, and from evening to morning—an almost habitual "spirit of heaviness." And how unfit they are, in that state, to sit down to the heavenly banquet, they themselves best know. But they must be prepared and clad for the high festival that is coming. And thus Jesus does it,—He draws them out of themselves, and turns their thoughts from looking in,—He shows them their mercies, and makes them reckon up their blessings, and teaches them that their sorrows are unreal,—and that they have no answer to the question, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" He leads them to rest more in Him;—by His wonderful alchemy, He turns anxiety into foresight, and a vague apprehension into a buoyant hope;—He shows them that they are undertaken for,—He gives them more of inward peace,—He lifts them up to higher levels, where the things of this world look little,—He places them where the shadows lose themselves,—and gradually, they shake off their dust—they realize more the love of God,—they recognize their safety and their hope,—they live under the activity of new life,—and "the spirit of heaviness" is

gone, and they have put on the "blue robe of praise" instead of that black garment of heaviness.

But remember, brethren, only Jesus can do this. It is a disease which has only one Physician, and He who gives the "garment of praise" is only the Lord Jesus Christ.

And here we close our Lenten thoughts. It will not have been in vain, if it have helped any one of us to realize, better than we have done before, the infinite fulness which there is in Christ, to meet every feeling and every characteristic of our common humanity.

Let me add only this,—as a proof of penitence,—that he who most tells to others of the good things which himself has tasted,—he who goes about healing wounds,—he who sets himself to loose all burdens and open all doors,—he who unfolds mysteries to the ignorant, and declares the secret of God's love to his fellow-men,—he who walks as a sunbeam, and carries light and joy in his steps,—he who assuages the sorrows of life, and pours balm into aching hearts,—that man best knows and honours—and that man is growing nearest to the likeness of Him, whom we have now seen to be at once the Evangelist, and the Physician,—the Liberator, and the Revealer, — the Jubilee, and the Comforter, of His Church.

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